the weekly Standard

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OBAMA'S MIDEAST MUDDLE
ABRAMS • BOOT • HAYES

PALIN'S POPULIST PEDIGREE

From Old Hickory to Sarah of the North

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

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Contents

November 16, 2009 • Volume 15, Number 9

2 The Scrapbook — *Pelosi's Victory, and Other Election News*

5 Casual — *Victorino Matus, job hunter*

6 Editorial — *The Future Is Bright*

Articles

7 Painting Virginia Red — BY JENNIFER RUBIN
Anatomy of a GOP victory

9 Barack Obama's Leading Indicator — BY JULES CRITTENDEN
Deval Patrick's fizzle bodes ill for the White House

11 Next, Locusts? — BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS
The abject failure of the Obama administration's Middle East policy

13 Dictatorships and Double Standards — BY STEPHEN F. HAYES
Tough on Fiji, soft on Iran

15 The Swedish Way — BY MARK P. LAGON
A surprising model for Chicago's crackdown on prostitution

Features

16 The Palin Persuasion — BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI
A case for the new populism

24 France on the Hudson — BY FRED SIEGEL & HARRY SIEGEL
It's 1973 all over again, as Bloomberg enters the ninth year of his reign

28 As We Stand Down, Can They Stand Up? — BY MAX BOOT
Iraq still needs close attention from the United States

Books & Arts

32 The Ayn and Only — BY KATHERINE MANGU-WARD
Cult-empress or great thinker?

35 Closing Time — BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER
The Irish country pub is thriving everywhere except Ireland

36 Ghost Patrol — BY ANDREW NAGORSKI
The curious mythology of the Vietnam war

38 Paint by Numbers — BY MARTHA BAYLES
New Deal art and the problems of public patronage

43 Unthriller — BY JOHN PODHORETZ
The aging King of Pop prepares for his final appearance

44 Parody — *Headlines amid GOP victories*

ANDREW JACKSON, SARAH PALIN, AND WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN BY GARY LOCKE

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Pelosi's Victory, and Other Election News

The Scrapbook is pleased to see so many national Democratic leaders whistling a happy tune after last Tuesday's elections. It's always good to know that one's political opponents enjoy a rich fantasy life.

Take House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "From our perspective, we won last night," the San Francisco Democrat told reporters on the morning after. "We had one race that we were engaged in, it was in northern New York, it was a race where a Republican has held the seat since the Civil War. And we won that seat. So, from our standpoint, . . . a candidate was victorious who supports health care reform, and his remarks last night said this was a victory for health care reform and other initiatives for the American people."

It must have been sheer unfortunate coincidence, then, that Rep. John Adler, a New Jersey Democrat, announced on Friday that he was going to vote against Pelosi's health care bill. As the *Wall Street Journal*'s Peter Landers noted, "Adler's state, of course, was the scene of a big Republican win this week when Chris Christie defeated incumbent Democrat Jon Corzine in the New Jersey gubernatorial race. Seeking his first term in Congress last year, Adler squeaked to victory with 52 percent of the vote, and he's one of the many Democratic freshmen who's vulnerable to a Republican challenge in 2010. The seat had long been held by GOP Rep. Jim Saxton who retired last year."

The governor's race in New Jersey, aside from three electioneering appearances by Barack Obama, must not have been one that Democrats "were engaged in," by Pelosi's lights. We're sure she will manage to straighten Mr. Adler out on that.

Meanwhile Democratic Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin of South Dakota also announced her opposition to Pelosi's bill on Friday, as did Idaho Democrat Walt Minnick. What an odd reaction, given their party's "victory for health care reform" in Tuesday's elections!

Michael Barone, the political analyst and *Washington Examiner* columnist, drilled down into the election results deeper than Pelosi must have. Among his other findings:

- Bergen County, New Jersey, a 56-42 percent Corzine constituency in 2005, came within a point or two of voting for Christie.
- Westchester County, New York, voted 58-42 percent for a Republican county executive, Rob Astorino, after voting almost exactly the opposite way in his race against the same candidate, Democratic incumbent Andy Spano, four years ago.
- The Virginia Board of Elections results by congressional district showed that three Democrats who captured seats in 2008 by very narrow margins (the Second, Fifth, and Eleventh districts) saw their districts go to Republican Bob McDonnell by whopping margins (24 points, 22 points, and 10 points, respectively).

Barone believes this last fact will not be lost on those freshman Democrats, or presumably on other Democrats who aren't drinking the Pelosi Kool-Aid.

What happened in Westchester County, by the way, to prompt such a radical reversal? Walter Olson of the Manhattan Institute has a theory that won't be welcome news to the Obama administration:

> Taxes were a key issue, but so was the county's consent to what was billed as a landmark housing-reform settlement in which it agreed to arm-twist affluent towns into accepting low-income housing. Many Westchester residents were wary of the potential consequences—and downright insulted when Spano suggested that to resist the lawsuit further would be to make the generally liberal-leaning county a "symbol of racism."
>
> The federally brokered settlement is itself of interest far beyond Westchester, if only as the occasion of a truly remarkable rhetorical flourish from an Obama Administration official, HUD deputy secretary Ron Sims: "It's time to remove zip codes as a factor in the quality of life in America." It was also hailed at once in some quarters as a model for similar legal action against other suburban jurisdictions considered guilty of not being hospitable enough to low-income housing. The Westchester voter revolt . . . may serve as a signal to local officials elsewhere to fight, rather than roll over, when the social engineers and their lawyers come knocking.

The Scrapbook wishes Nancy Pelosi many more victories like the one she enjoyed last week. ♦

Heckuva Medal, Dr. Joe Medicine Crow

George W. Bush was rightly pilloried for flying in to inspect the damage done by Hurricane Katrina and lapsing into hack-politician mode on an occasion that called for something finer: "Brownie, you're doing a heckuva job," he said of his hapless FEMA director Michael Brown.

Barack Obama's crack communications team put out word last Thursday that the president would make his first statement on the massacre at Ft. Hood at 5 P.M., during his previously scheduled appearance at the Department of Interior's Tribal Nations Conference. So with all the camera's rolling, and the nation watching, what did the president do? He lapsed into hack-politician mode:

> Let me first of all just thank Ken and the entire Department of the Interior staff for organizing just an extraordinary conference. I want to thank my Cabinet members and senior administration officials who participated today. I hear that Dr. Joe Medicine Crow was around, and so I want to give a shout-

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out to that Congressional Medal of Honor winner. It's good to see you. (Applause.)

He continued in this vein for another couple of minutes before finally noting the obvious: "As some of you might have heard, there has been a tragic shooting at the Fort Hood Army base in Texas."

But let's go back to that "shout-out" for a moment, and sum up the tone-deafness here. Now, Joe Medicine Crow seems to be a great guy. According to Wikipedia, while a scout in the 103rd Infantry Division during World War II, he "led a successful war party . . . making a midnight raid to steal the horses from a battalion of German officers (as he rode off, he sang a traditional Crow honor song)." How cool is that? But while he was awarded a Bronze Star, he did not earn a Congressional Medal of Honor. What's more, it is a faux pas to say the least to refer to anyone "winning" such an honor, as the president did. These awards are earned and bestowed—the Powerball jackpot is something you win.

All in all, it was a heck of an unpresidential performance. That said, The Scrapbook will eat its homburg if the media make even a tenth as much mention of it as they did of Bush's Brownie moment. ♦

THE FAT LADY SINGS.

Of Purges and Stalinists

The Scrapbook confesses that it usually reads Frank Rich's weekly column in the *New York Times* for its comic potential—or if we're lucky, for its numerous pop-cultural references to the likes of Desi Arnaz, Mister Ed, or the deeper meaning of Reagan-era TV programs such as *St. Elsewhere*.

Most of the time, however, we're disappointed. For Rich's columns tend to offer disturbingly clinical depictions of their author's spleen, as he sputters and rages and grows red in the face at the mention of Republicans or conservatives, or worse, conservative Republicans. Last week's essay on the contentious, three-way race in New York's 23rd congressional district was no exception, offering feverish descriptions of "GOP killing fields," the "wacky paranoid cult" of the right, "seething rage, fear of minorities, maniacal contempt," "a riotous and bloody national GOP civil war"—well, you get the idea.

What struck us as odd, however, was Rich's insistence on characterizing conservatives as "Stalinists," a conceit that so entranced his editors that they titled his piece, "The GOP Stalinists Invade Upstate New York."

You would think that the *New York Times*, which was full of admiration for Stalin in his day, would be hesitant about using the word "Stalinist" as an epithet. Indeed, there has been a movement in recent years to force the *Times* to surrender the Pulitzer Prize awarded in 1932 to its Moscow correspondent, Walter Duranty, whose false stories from Moscow were deliberately designed to disguise Stalin's mass killings and starvation in the Ukraine.

You would also think that Frank Rich would be careful about losing self-control on the subject of "Stalinism in full purge mode" when Republicans complain about Republican candidates who stray from core party principles. For the most famous case of a "purge" on the basis of party ideology was carried out not by any Republican, but by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Democrat of New York, in 1938.

In the same year that Stalin was conducting his famous purge trials in Moscow—in effect, judicially murdering old Bolsheviks—FDR declared that Senate Democrats who opposed New Deal measures were "deliberately repudiating the very principles

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of progress which they had espoused in order to be elected." And so he campaigned in Democratic primaries in Ohio, Kentucky, California, Oklahoma, Georgia, South Carolina, and Maryland in support of candidates who opposed incumbents and were more to Roosevelt's taste.

Of course, as we know, FDR's attempted "purge," as his critics labeled it, was a failure: Most of his favored candidates lost their races, his targets got credit for political independence, and the president's political clout was greatly diminished in Congress.

As any serious student of history will attest, Roosevelt was wrong to initiate the purge—he was destined to fail and it hurt him in the long run—but the president was certainly entitled to fight for his beliefs within the democratic process. That is what FDR did, and that is what conservatives did in New York's 23rd. Does this mean that the Democratic party of Franklin D. Roosevelt's day was a "wacky paranoid cult" full of "maniacal contempt" for its adversaries? Or that FDR was a Stalinist? Of course not.

The wacky paranoid cult is probably the one that prevails in the *Times* newsroom, where dissenters on the right are routinely purged, and columnists who should know better use terms like "Stalinist" without realizing what it means—especially in the house of Walter Duranty. ♦

Ohio Rolls the Dice

What is it that makes Ohio seem the essence of wholesomeness? A mild Midwestern landscape and mainstream politics? The Cincinnati roots of soap opera and Ivory Snow? John Glenn's smile? One thing it isn't any longer, as of last week, is the Buckeye State's rejection of casino gambling. Even as the culture of family-friendly "gaming," as the euphemism has it, invaded all but one of the neighboring states, Ohio voters held the line, defeating four ballot initiatives. But on Tuesday they finally caved. By a six-point margin, they adopted a constitutional amendment drafted by gambling interests, which will enjoy monopoly protection such that local jurisdictions won't even be able to prevent casinos from staying open 24 hours.

Inevitable? Maybe, with unemployment in the state over 10 percent and cities near the state line tired of watching local residents travel to swell the coffers of other states. Also inevitable, though, are the human costs. If you haven't kept up with the refinements of high-tech slot machines—now the chief attraction at most casinos—we recommend Maura Casey's eye-opening "Gambling with Lives" at the *First Things* website. It recounts how slot machines are elaborately customized to induce the gambler to keep playing faster, longer. Read it and weep. ♦

Boycott Pistachios!

The Scrapbook does not, as a matter of principle, either endorse or promote business boycotts. Some of us at The Weekly Standard have traumatic memories of César Chávez and his grape/lettuce boycott of the 1960s and '70s, or the inanities of the Nestlé baby formula boycott of the 1970s and '80s, and—well, the list goes on.

But to every rule there must be an exception, and here is ours. A California company called Wonderful Pistachios has retained, as its public mascot, Levi Johnston—the boorish 19-year-old father of Sarah Palin's grandchild, who is best known for his relentless public trashing of the Palin family, and is soon to appear naked in the pages of *Playgirl*. In one television commercial, Johnston saunters toward the camera while offstage female voices call out his name and a huge security man walks beside him. The bodyguard nods in the direction of Johnston, who cracks open a nut from its shell, and a snarky adolescent voice intones, "Now Levi Johnston does it with protection."

As we say, The Scrapbook is reluctant to call for a boycott; but Wonderful Pistachio's decision to employ Levi Johnston for a public giggle at the expense of his 11-month-old son should, in our opinion, cost Wonderful Pistachios some business. Until they find a new spokesman, we're munching on cashews. ♦

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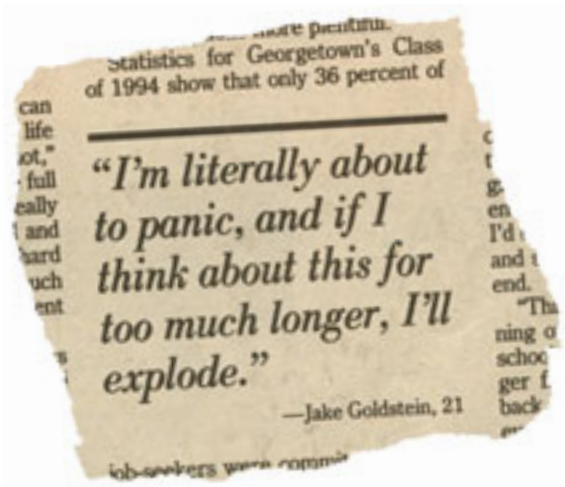
Keep Hope Alive

Whenever I offer career advice to students, I tell them that journalism is a great profession because, given enough time to read up on the subject, we can write on almost anything we like. Of course in the midst of a recession, such advice may be deemed useless—after all, is anyone even hiring? A colleague tells me that until recently his advice to students was, "Whatever you do, don't go to law school." Now he says, "Have you ever thought about law school?"

The job market is that bad. Even now in November, months after graduation, there are people with newly minted degrees who remain unemployed. Everywhere they turn, either companies aren't hiring, or they're looking for applicants with greater experience. And the words "Don't worry, you'll find something. It'll all work out," provide little solace. Instead, jobless graduates are left feeling desperate, unwanted, embittered, and resentful.

At least that's how I felt upon graduating from Georgetown in 1995. Back then, the job market was also grim—for an international relations major. Although the campus career center posted job listings, almost all of them were in the fields of investment banking and accounting: CS First Boston, Arthur Andersen, Andersen Consulting, Bain, Merrill Lynch, Bear Stearns. Finance majors were entering their senior semesters with business cards, signing bonuses, and clothing allowances. Meanwhile, my initial excitement over a job posting with the words "international diplomacy" had been reduced by the fine print that read, "accounting majors only." (Worse off were Russian majors, who had to read notices explicitly stating, "No Russian majors.")

That summer of 1995 was a long one: sending out résumés, making fruitless follow-up calls, talking to a headhunter, and waiting for hours at a temp service—the receptionist forgot I was there, and by the time she remembered, my interviewer had left for the day. Once at Mass, during the offering of petitions such as "so-and-so's grandfather who is dying," I was tempted to blurt out, "That I may find a job, we pray to the Lord!"


Statistics for Georgetown's Class of 1994 show that only 36 percent of

"I'm literally about to panic, and if I think about this for too much longer, I'll explode."

—Jake Goldstein, 21

Around Labor Day, I decided to accept a part-time job as a research assistant at a defense consulting firm. The boss had a famously short temper and gave a frightening stare (aided by his crooked eye). He was a wicked man. Just thinking about the place, a nervous pit is forming in my stomach. Things finally hit rock bottom when my boss asked me to recopy his son's science project to make it neater—the boy was in the sixth grade at the time. (From what I hear, he later went to Harvard.)

About the time I took that job, the *Washington Post* ran an article under the headline "Pressure Point: As Summer Fades, the Heat's Still on Jobless College Grads." It was comforting to know I wasn't alone. In fact, it resonated so strongly with me that I saved the section for posterity. Six months later, in February 1996, I finally landed a full-time position as a staff assistant at this magazine, and I've never looked back. But not too long ago, sorting through old papers, I came across the *Post* story again, and memories of that depressing summer and fall came flooding back. (Now yellowed and frayed, the section includes a review of the movie *Mortal Kombat*.)

Rereading it, I was reminded that one of the people the reporter interviewed was a fellow Georgetown student. David Sprindzunas, we were told, was "juggling two unpaid summer internships at Virginia firms" and had spent ten months sending out 50 résumés without success. Said David, "I'm feeling the pressure of having worked a summer and not gotten a job out of that, and that means now there's a lot of pressure to have something fall into place immediately—because each month here in D.C. means more rent and money lost, not gained." He also told the *Post* that he wouldn't consider "taking a job that's too far from his intended field."

Fourteen years later, David is a real estate agent here in Washington. When I tracked him down last week, he told me that not long after the article ran he landed a position at a French consulting firm. He later went into private banking but decided by the end of 2001 to try his hand at real estate. "It's been a good match thus far," he says. As a sales associate at Coldwell Banker, David jokes that he has managed to build for himself a "very mini real estate empire."

For a college graduate unemployed in November, it might be hard to believe that things work out in the end, but they really do for the most part. As for my old boss, he ended up doing a stint in jail for tax evasion. I couldn't think of a happier ending.

Victorino Matus

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the weekly Standard

The Future Is Bright

Republican conservatives and moderates are at each other's throats. Tea party populists are furious at President Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and aren't crazy about Republicans either. Democrats haven't got a clue. There's talk of a third party. The economy is stagnant as unemployment, now 10.2 percent, climbs. It's beginning to look like the late 1970s.

This is good news for Republicans—extremely good news. Today's struggles between conservatives and moderates are mere skirmishes compared with the titanic intraparty battle touched off by Ronald Reagan's challenge of President Ford for the Republican presidential nomination in 1976. Ford's dreamy Democratic successor, Jimmy Carter, brought matters to a head. He proved incompetent in foreign policy and a bumbler on anything to do with the economy.

The result: a Republican bull market. In 1978, Republicans gained 15 House seats and 3 senators. That was a preview of 1980, when they netted 35 House seats and captured control of the Senate with a 12-seat pickup. And, oh, yes, there was another victory. Reagan won the presidency in a landslide.

The resemblance between the 1970s and today isn't exact. Political analogies never are. But there's enough to hearten Republicans. As we saw in the election of Republican governors in Virginia and New Jersey last week, the political energy and ardor are on the center-right. Just as they were 30 years ago.

A coalition of Republicans, independents, and tea party populists is beginning to take shape. How come? Because they again have a common foe. In the 1970s, it was Carter's feeble leadership in the face of stagflation and the collapse of U.S. interests abroad. Today, it's the hyper-liberal policies of Obama and Pelosi that are fostering rampant spending, surging deficits, ruinous debt, higher taxes, growing unemployment, and unlimited government in Washington. On top of all that, Obama's foreign policy of "engaging" adversaries and hammering allies is a dangerous flop.

Obama and congressional Democrats could frustrate the emerging coalition by changing course, seeking a "reset" in relations with Republicans, and agreeing to bipartisan (and far less costly) deals on health care and other domestic policies. But they're too stubbornly ideological for that. They've decided voters in Virginia and New Jersey were sending no message at all.

Instead, their response is: If you don't like what we're offering, we'll give you more of it. Far more Americans oppose Obamacare than support it. Yet Democratic representative Gerald Connolly of Virginia said he "concluded" from last week's election that "we've got to pass health care . . . [and] give Democrats something to be excited about." It's "a matter of tangibles being delivered," said Democratic representative Jan Schakowsky of Illinois.

Democrats have persuaded themselves that the Republican blowout of 1994 was caused by President Clinton's failure to enact health care reform. This was the election dominated by "angry white men." So we're to understand it was the defeat of Hillarycare that enraged them? Only a fool or a liberal Democrat could believe that.

The mainstream media haven't scoped things out any more convincingly. Their line is Republicans won two big races last week and, boy, are they in trouble now. The most telling result was the loss of a Republican House seat in upstate New York as a result of turmoil among conservatives and moderates. And more such clashes, in the media's mind, will hamper Republicans in capturing House and Senate seats in the 2010 midterm elections.

What happened in the 1970s suggests otherwise. The turmoil among Republicans then was a sign of interest and intensity. The same is true now. The effect of the battles inside the party is to focus attention on combating the greater threat that draws Republicans, independents, and tea party folks together. Moderates, conservatives—both argue they're better at the overarching task of stopping the Obama-Pelosi agenda.

There's another important task for Republicans. They must keep the fragile coalition from splintering. Independents and tea party people got on board last week, but they haven't coalesced with Republicans in an enduring way. They need to. Victories in 2010 and 2012 depend on it.

Republicans can firm up the coalition by doing three things. One, refrain from dissing the tea party people. "They're not fringe," says Republican representative Darrell Issa of California. Two, stress the fiscal and economic issues that appeal to independents (and most Americans). Three, run candidates guided by conservative principles who can talk about these issues in concrete ways, as Bob McDonnell did in winning the Virginia governor's race. Manage all three and the Republican future will be bright.

—*Fred Barnes*

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Painting Virginia Red

Anatomy of a GOP victory.

BY JENNIFER RUBIN

DAVE MALAN

Richmond

Bob McDonnell's blowout victory in Virginia's gubernatorial race is both a comeback story and a cautionary tale for those who believe in "permanent majorities" in American politics.

For Republicans this was a dramatic first step back from the 2006 and 2008 thrashings and proof that Barack Obama's presidency has spawned a conservative counterinsurgency. As McDonnell told THE WEEKLY STANDARD as the polls were closing, "I don't think there is any doubt that the federal issues have created an advantage for me." He reeled off cap and trade, taxes, unfunded mandates, and health care reform as top issues. "I have taken a stand against them. My opponent has been ambivalent or in favor."

The Virginia GOP lost gubernatorial races in 2001 and 2005, congressional and Senate contests in 2006 and 2008, control of the state senate in 2007, and the presidential race in 2008. (As a recount winner in the 2005 attorney general race, McDonnell was the last Virginia Republican to escape before 2006's electoral tidal wave and the first to emerge in 2009.)

While conservative pundits were still agonizing over the 2008 results, McDonnell's communications director Tucker Martin says, "We didn't have the luxury to do punditry." Campaign manager Phil Cox explains McDonnell's serenity during a time of GOP angst: "He knows who he is. He knew what kind of campaign he wanted to run." Starting in December 2008, McDonnell began running as someone "who would never back away from conservative principles but someone who can solve problems."

Unlike other Republicans, he didn't have to run while the faltering Iraq war, Katrina, and GOP scandals dominated the news. A senior McDonnell adviser notes, it was advantageous simply "to introduce himself as Bob McDonnell and not Bob plus anyone else." McDonnell also had the advantage of a pattern over the previous eight Virginia gubernatorial races, in which the party that captured the White House lost the following year's gubernatorial race.

Democrats were optimistic after their June primary that the more centrist Creigh Deeds would be better positioned against McDonnell than former DNC chairman Terry McAuliffe or the more liberal Brian Moran. But McDonnell had defeated Deeds in 2005, and his camp knew Deeds angered easily, lacked an animating philosophy, had run six points below the top of the ticket (and poorly in Northern Virginia), and had a tax and spend record. McDonnell, moreover, had been planning his run for

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years with a cohesive campaign team, volunteer networks, and a problem-solving message.

Without a primary challenger, McDonnell also had the luxury to focus on independent voters (whom he won by a stunning 2 to 1 margin) and on his policy proposals. Beginning in February, McDonnell took on liberal policies on taxation, spending, cap and trade, card check, and government-run health care. As Obama's ratings on these policies plunged, McDonnell was positioned to hammer home his objections to the Democrats' agenda.

Two events in July foretold the race's outcome. On July 20 African-American Democratic business leader Sheila Johnson endorsed McDonnell, to Democrats' chagrin. "Everyone saw the significance of what happened," a McDonnell adviser noted. A prominent Democrat was citing McDonnell's problem-solving, pro-business outlook. On July 21 the McDonnell camp pulled a late night refining a detailed transportation plan. McDonnell thereafter contrasted his program with Deeds's lack of one. Cox observes, "In retrospect it was *very* important because the Deeds campaign did not put out a plan," allowing McDonnell to "grab the mantle" of reform and policy innovation.

Deeds sealed his fate in the September 17 debate. Cornered, Deeds said he would consider raising taxes in a recession. In the press gaggle afterward Deeds talked in circles, a moment replayed endlessly in McDonnell ads. The image, as Cox observes, was of "a guy who wasn't speaking straight and was going to raise your taxes in a pretty tough economic time." On September 20 the *Washington Post* ran an op-ed chastising Deeds for waffling. On September 23 Deeds responded with his own op-ed declaring that he *would* be open to a tax increase. The next day the *Post* endorsed Deeds, citing as a key factor his willingness to raise taxes.

The McDonnell team had its dream race: fiscal conservative versus tax hiker. As a top campaign strategist remarks, with his voting record Deeds wasn't "the centrist everyone [was] trying to portray him as. We tagged him out of the chute [as a big taxer] and then he reinforced it."

The lopsided 59-41 win suggests the tax issue remains potent. McDonnell explains, "When people are going through tough economic times, they expect government to work better." Stressing that voters want "more effective and innovative" government, he continues, "They expect us to cut and reorganize and not raise taxes." He warns that with the Bush tax cuts set to expire in 2011 voters nationwide will focus on the potential for "hundreds of billions" in higher taxes.

In addition to McDonnell's victory in Virginia, Republicans captured the two other statewide races—for lieutenant governor and attorney general—by 13 and 15 point margins respectively. They picked up six House of Delegate seats—in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and Southwest Virginia. With momentum and newly engaged voters, they are now eyeing at least four seats. (Tom Perriello, who voted for cap and trade, tops the list.) If nothing else, McDonnell will provide a "fundraising bonanza," as one Republican insider observes.

Deeds's failure to spell out detailed policies proved disastrous. A former Republican state senator observes that after Obama's candidacy, 'voters are wary of people who run for office when they don't fill in the blanks.'

At one level, it was a race between a hapless candidate and a polished one. The University of Virginia's Larry J. Sabato observes, "Everyone agrees Creigh Deeds has a significant charisma deficit. McDonnell is as smooth as silk and very articulate, by contrast." And McDonnell assembled a polished team of aides. McDonnell is quick to credit "the ground game" as "the best I have seen." Campaign chairman Ed Gillespie calls McDonnell "the best candidate since George Allen 1.0, in 1993." As a McDonnell adviser remarks, "He *competed* in Northern Virginia. The notion we can write off Northern Virginia is crazy. We don't have to win Fairfax County, but we don't have to give up 60,000 votes."

The race also demonstrates the ongoing appeal of fiscal conservatism, when well articulated. McDonnell says, "Overwhelmingly what I hear about [from voters] is that issues mattered." Gillespie says that McDonnell did what national Republicans don't do enough:

> "We say we are for lower taxes. Vote for us, damn it! Figure it out! Bob explains he is for lower taxes *because* he wants to encourage more businesses and jobs. He is for charter schools *because* it makes all schools better. He is for offshore drilling *because* it can help plug the revenue hole and generate high-paying jobs. He spent a lot of time talking to independent voters about what is in it for them."

In contrast to McDonnell's approach, Deeds's failure to spell out detailed policies proved disastrous. A former Republican state senator observes that after Obama's candidacy, "voters are wary of people who run for office when they don't fill in the blanks."

Despite White House efforts to distance Obama from the results, there is an unmistakable message for Beltway Democrats. Mississippi governor Haley Barbour, who heads the Republican Governors' Association, agreed McDonnell was "greatly assisted by what's going on in D.C." While McDonnell talked "about what's on people's minds—which is job creation," Barbour observed, "people don't understand why they have spent the last few months talking about health care [reform]," which will drive up costs and squeeze employers.

Gillespie remarks on the shift since December 2008: "The environment changed substantially in the course of those ten months, especially with independent voters, because of what was going on in Washington, D.C." It is certainly the case, as David

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Wasserman of the *Cook Political Report* explains, that McDonnell's success is "a reflection of a national environment." A victory of this magnitude, he says, demonstrates not just a change in the electorate but a "change in opinion." After less than a year of Obama and a Democratic Congress, taxes and spending have particular resonance. Wasserman emphasizes, "Voters are wary of too much government spending."

Democrats didn't simply lose three statewide races. Republicans' victories were far flung, from the third district in the heart of coal country—where incumbent Dan Bowling lost by 15 points to a 25-year-old businessman, Will Morefield, who talked incessantly of the damage national Democrats' energy policies would do to coal—to Lynchburg, where Liberty University students turned out en masse to toss the incumbent Democrat Shannon Valentine, to upscale McLean where veteran Republican operative Barbara Comstock aggressively tied the incumbent to Deeds's tax hike position. Attorney general-elect Ken Cuccinelli cheerfully told THE WEEKLY STANDARD, "We are going to have Republicans inside the Beltway."

The results in Northern Virginia should alarm Democrats. This region had trended their way in recent years, reflecting growing anti-GOP sentiment in the Bush administration's final years. As Fairfax County Republican chairman Anthony Bedell explains, "Northern Virginia is very Washington centric." And it was there that voters eyed events in D.C. and embraced McDonnell's message of fiscal conservatism. McDonnell took Fairfax County (which George Allen lost by 65,000 votes and John McCain by 110,000) 51 to 49 percent and ran up even higher margins in Washington, D.C.'s farther flung suburbs.

The Virginia results confirm that Republicans are returning from the political wilderness. An effective candidate with the right message can rebuild a winning center-right coalition. The right message in the Obama era is firm opposition to the national Democratic party agenda. ♦

Barack Obama's Leading Indicator

Deval Patrick's fizzle bodes ill for the White House. BY JULES CRITTENDEN

Toward the end of George W. Bush's second term, no one wanted to be seen with him on the campaign trail. That hasn't happened yet to Barack Obama, but just nine months into his first term, in bluest Massachusetts which he carried by 26 points, he couldn't fill a room with Democratic donors . . . though he managed to fill the sidewalk outside with demonstrators.

Inside, the president voiced a sense of impending doom about the reelection prospects of Massachusetts governor Deval Patrick. Addressing the reportedly "nearly half-empty" Westin Copley ballroom, he said, "There really should be no doubt that this guy gets a second term. But let's be honest. This is going to be a tough race."

Deval Patrick

Or as the *Boston Herald*, the scrappy conservative tabloid I work for, put it, "Maybe We Can't."

It's unclear whether there were more supporters inside or protesters outside the hotel, but some of Obama's core constituencies showed up to boo him. Gay rights advocates and antiwar zealots, bitterly disappointed with their president, were there, alongside union protesters who had come to denounce Patrick.

It is ironic that Obama and Patrick should find themselves side by side facing horrible truths. Their political careers have been closely entwined. They've both employed campaign adviser David Axelrod and campaign manager David Plouffe, now back with Patrick's 2010 bid after running Patrick's 2006 and Obama's 2008 efforts. "Yes We Can," the famous 2008 Obama campaign slogan, was lifted from Patrick's 2006 "Together We Can," along with key passages of some of Patrick's speeches, prompting a flap over whether this amounted to plagiarism. Even Obama's MTV admonishment to young black men to pull up their pants was an echo of Patrick.

Both men come from Chicago. Obama moved there after college to work in community organizing, then again after law school to work for a law firm, teach, and enter politics. Patrick, a South Side housing project native who got out early on a scholarship to Milton Academy, like Obama attended Harvard Law, then worked as a civil rights attorney in both government and the corporate world.

As promising young lawyers, they crossed paths professionally in 1993, when Patrick, then with the Department of Justice, and Obama, at a private firm, supported ACORN's successful bid to implement in Illinois the "motor voter" law, which allows people to register to vote when they get a driver's license. Later they campaigned for each other and shared pointers, rhetoric, and

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strategy in late-night phone calls.

Patrick was elected to the "Corner Office" (as they say in Massachusetts, where the governor has no official residence) as a political outsider in 2006. It was a foreshadowing of Obama's own meteoric ascent to the Oval Office. Patrick had no base and, he soon learned, few friends in the State House. And when it comes to the hard business of politics, Obama is discovering he has few friends in Congress. Both bodies have done largely as they pleased, seeing to their own interests. There is nothing unusual about that. Many chief executives experience it. Patrick and Obama, however, lacking significant political experience, have shown that they also largely lack the political skill to either corral or win over legislative bodies controlled by their own party despite hiring well-seasoned top aides.

Then, too, they both seem to have a political tin ear. Patrick came into office on a regal note, replacing the governor's Ford with a Cadillac, redecorating the Corner Office, using the state police helicopter as a personal conveyance, and, worse, appointing Democratic coatholders to high-paying do-nothing jobs while laying off state workers and closing public pools during the hottest two weeks of the year. Obama has made some similar missteps, showing more urgency about Chicago's Olympic bid than the Afghan war, playing a great deal of golf, and mishandling hot-button issues from bailed-out executives' bonuses to a Harvard professor's racially charged disorderly conduct bust.

It is beginning to look as if, not only in their campaigns but also in governance, the Patrick experience presages Obama's, as the new, grassroots, Internet-savvy politics they espoused has run headlong into the old, dinosaur, media-savvy backroom politics they eschewed.

That, and an economy that would challenge even the most adept pol. Here's a quick list of Patrick's accomplishments in Massachusetts: Taxes are up; services are down; and the cost of the universal health care plan pushed through (in good times) by former Republican governor Mitt Romney is forcing ever deeper budget cuts amid economic crisis. Under Obama, meanwhile, the federal deficit is at $1.4 trillion and counting; the recession might, with luck, be stalled; our closest allies are hanging in there despite alarming rebuffs and slights; the Iranians and Russians are laughing; and the Taliban and al Qaeda are hopeful, though advocates of health care reform are less so.

Obama, thanks to deficit-spending privileges that Patrick lacks, has so far managed to avoid the immediate consequences of his actions. Otherwise his numbers might look more like Patrick's.

In most recent polls Obama's job approval has bounced along just above 50 percent, though some polls show it below. Patrick's numbers are far worse, with MassInsight finding in early August that 19 percent held a positive view of his job performance, while 77 percent deemed it fair or poor. Polling for the 2010 gubernatorial race shows state treasurer Tim Cahill, a Democrat running as an independent, and GOP candidate Charles Baker in an even three-way split with Patrick. Take Cahill out, and Patrick is still only neck-and-neck with the Republican, here in bluest Massachusetts. Another recent poll shows voters harbor fond memories of someone they once couldn't wait to see the last of: Mitt Romney.

At the campaign event at the Westin Copley, Obama warned of dire consequences for the nation if his agenda isn't pushed forward. Maybe, but the more likely danger is to his own chances for reelection in 2012, should he find himself before his first year is out disrespected and unable to pass his own initiatives in a body controlled by his own party.

The good news for Obama is that the national GOP, like the hapless Massachusetts Republican party, is disorganized and leaderless. The Republicans' disarray may be the best thing either Patrick or Obama—who briefly captured the imagination of millions—has going for him. ♦

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Next, Locusts?

The abject failure of the Obama administration's Middle East policy. BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS

Clinton and Netanyahu: Smile when you say that!

Can anything else possibly go wrong for the Obama administration's Middle East policy? In the past ten days, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has twice reversed herself publicly on her attitude toward the Israeli settlements. Palestinians have refused her direct request to rejoin peace talks with Israel, and Palestinian Authority president Abbas has said he will not run for reelection. U.S.-Israel relations are in a state of frozen mistrust. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, among others, are calling Obama's policy a complete failure—in news stories as well as editorials. The only thing missing is a plague of locusts.

The policy is indeed a complete failure. In ten months the administration has managed to offend and demoralize Israelis and Palestinians, lose the support of Arab governments, and reduce previously excellent relations with the government of Israel to levels unmatched since the James Baker days. Meanwhile, George Mitchell's trips to the region are increasingly reminiscent of the Colin Powell visits in 2002 and 2003—producing little but embarrassment. The Israeli "100 percent settlement freeze" and the Arab outreach to Israel, early goals of the Obama team, are now forgotten, as is an early resumption of serious Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

These disasters are mostly the product of an ignorant and belligerent attitude toward Israel and especially its prime minister. The ignorance was most evident in the administration's view that a total construction freeze could be imposed not only in every settlement but in Jerusalem itself. But the U.S. policy was worse: We demanded a freeze that would apply to construction by Jews, but not by Arabs; could any Israeli leader be expected to support such a position? One does not need to be a member of the Knesset to understand that such a freeze was impossible for Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition as it would have been for any Israeli prime minister—but apparently this fact was beyond the understanding of Mitchell, Rahm Emanuel, and all the other "experts" on the Obama team.

The belligerence toward Netanyahu has been evident all along, but is best shown by the refusal to tell Israel's prime minister whether or not the president will see him this coming week when Netanyahu (like the president) addresses the United Jewish Communities annual general assembly in Washington. The Israelis gave the White House weeks of notice that Netanyahu had agreed to speak, would be in town, and hoped to see Obama. The White House reaction has been to keep him twisting in the wind, with news stories several days before his arrival saying the president had not decided yet whether to see Netanyahu.

Think of it: Our closest ally in the region, critical issues at stake (from Iran's nuclear program and the recent Israeli seizure of an Iranian arms shipment meant for Hezbollah to Abbas's announcement), yet the Israelis get no answer. Obama and his "experts" may think they are reminding Netanyahu who is boss, but they are in fact reminding all of us why Israelis no longer trust Obama—and making closer cooperation between the two governments that much harder.

The problems Netanyahu has with Obama pale in comparison with those of the Palestinians, and Abbas's announcement reflects their frustrations. The best example: Obama and Clinton lured Abbas out on the settlements-freeze limb and then sawed it off. When they said a total freeze including Jerusalem was necessary, he of course happily agreed. But when they abandoned that doomed policy and instead began talking of "restraint," he could not climb down.

Abbas has threatened to leave many times before, and it's worth noting

NEWSCOM

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that he did not resign. He said he would not seek reelection next year, in elections scheduled for January 24 but highly unlikely to take place then—if ever. So he will be around for months more, in fact indefinitely if elections keep getting postponed. His statement must be regarded, then, not as a Shermanesque personal denial but as a protest against an American policy that has weakened him and left him high and dry.

Israelis and Palestinians when I visited in October had two main questions: Who is making this Middle East policy, and do they not realize by now that it is a disaster? At least in this, one can say the administration has produced Israeli-Palestinian unity. They are also united in watching warily as the president seems unable to make a decision about Afghanistan. For the Palestinians, this suggests he'll never really take on the Israelis for them, as they thought he might back in January. For the Israelis, it means he'll never take on Iran, and that they may in the end face the Iranian nuclear threat on their own.

They all wonder whether to blame Mitchell or Clinton or Dennis Ross or National Security Adviser Jim Jones or the State Department's Near East bureau, and each individual Israeli and Palestinian has a favorite target. But the answers to their questions seem obvious: It is the president's policy, and no, he does not seem to be aware that it has already failed. While he has backed off from the early targets, he has not changed his attitude toward Israel's government, nor altered his basic approach: to push for negotiations over "core issues" as soon as possible.

And this is the fundamental problem with Obama's policy: Like too many of his predecessors he believes that a solution is at hand if only he can force the parties to the table. There, presumably under American tutelage, they will reach American-style compromises (pragmatic, sensible, realistic) and resolve the dispute, with Nobel Peace Prizes for all. The only question is where the table is: Camp David, Taba, Annapolis, Oslo, perhaps this time Chicago.

This approach undermines the one real hope in the region, which is the practical advances being made in the West Bank. There, the economy is improving, law and order are maintained, the Palestinian Authority is fighting Hamas, Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation is growing, and mobility for the population is increasing. In recent months Israel removed more checkpoints and expanded the hours of the Allenby Bridge to Jordan. It isn't paradise, but it isn't Gaza either, and life is better each year. It could be far better if the Obama administration would abandon its doomed efforts to force an Israeli construction freeze in Jerusalem and an Arab embrace of Israel, and instead ask them all to think of real-world ways to keep improving life in the West Bank. There are many ways this could be done, from further steps to remove Israeli barriers to movement, to reliable and generous Arab financial support.

The way forward does not lie through fancy international conferences, and one idea still mentioned as an Obama option—proposing a final status plan—would be disastrous and unsuccessful. The way for the Palestinians to get a state is to go ahead and build it. If and when the institutions are there and functioning, from police and courts to a parliament, negotiations will reflect that fact. But the argument that settling the borders and removing the Israeli troops must come first is a path to failure. For one thing, Israel will not and should not leave until it is clear that the West Bank can be policed by Palestinians and that the region will not be a source of terrorism against Israel, as Gaza and South Lebanon became when Israel left there. No conference and no treaty can provide such a guarantee; only functioning Palestinian police forces that are already fighting and defeating terror can do so.

Such a practical approach would bring other benefits. It would enhance the status and power of Palestinian moderates who are working to improve life in the West Bank, rather than enhancing the status and power of old PLO officials who thrive on endless, useless negotiating sessions. It would put a premium on practical Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, rather than elevating precisely the final status questions (like Jerusalem or Palestinian refugees) that most bitterly divide them. It would increase the gap between the West Bank and Gaza, thereby showing Palestinians that Hamas rule brings only despair and poverty. It would press the Arab states to help real live Palestinians in the West Bank, rather than the imaginary Palestinians—all either bold jihadists or desperate widows and orphans—whom they see on Al Jazeera. In fact, except for occasional visits by Jordanians and Egyptians (who have peace treaties with Israel already), top Arab officials haven't a clue what's going on in the West Bank, for they've never been there. Not one head of state or government or foreign minister, not once. If George Mitchell wants to do something useful, he could organize a tour; take a few princes and foreign ministers to Ramallah and Jericho and Jenin, where they would find that they are neither in Somalia nor some heroic battle scene against Zionist oppressors.

But thus far, the anniversary of Obama's election appears to have passed with no rethinking of policy. Instead the administration slogs forward, judging itself by its elevated intentions rather than its performance. Clinton's pronouncements—demand a total construction freeze one day, accept Netanyahu's more modest offer the next, then back to the wider demands two days later in Morocco—are increasingly reminiscent of World War I trench warfare: gain a few yards, lose a few more, while the casualties pile up. There will be no progress this way, and the practical efforts that should be at the heart of U.S. policy will instead be undermined as we poison Israeli-Palestinian relations and degrade the trust both parties have in us. ♦

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Dictatorships and Double Standards

Tough on Fiji, soft on Iran.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

An Iranian protester in L.A., with a cartoon depicting Obama and Ahmadinejad

On November 4, protesters gathered outside the gates of the U.S. embassy in Tehran to mark the 30th anniversary of the hostage-taking. There were the usual government-backed "Death to America" protests—celebrating the then-young revolutionaries and their enduring fanaticism.

But there were other protests, too. Nearly six months after the fixed Iranian election brought hundreds of thousands of green-clad Iranian democrats to the streets, a few thousand brave souls gathered to challenge the corrupt Iranian regime. The crowd was smaller than in May, but their hopes were no less audacious. They had organized secretly to stage a protest to tell anyone who would listen that their democratic aspirations had not been snuffed out and that, despite the indifference of world leaders and the violence of the mullahs, they would persevere.

"Death to the Dictator," they shouted in Farsi, words that could get them killed. And in what the Associated Press described as "a new and startling appeal," the protesters spoke directly to the U.S. president. "Obama, Obama," they chanted. "You are either with them or with us."

At least four foreign journalists were detained during the protests, and members of government-backed militias appeared in riot gear beating protesters with heavy clubs and arresting others.

Back at the State Department, spokesman Ian Kelly prepared to open his daily briefing with an unusually harsh condemnation. The United States "deplores" the "unprecedented" actions of an unelected leadership that "have undermined any opportunity for progress toward reengagement and constructive dialogue."

These would have been the strongest words issued by the Obama administration about the Iranian protests if they had been about the Iranian regime. But they were actually about Fiji. Kelly said absolutely nothing about Iran.

What he was deploring was a decision by "Fiji's *de facto* government to expel New Zealand's acting head of mission as well as Australia's high commissioner." That last act, according to Kelly, was "unprecedented in that Australia now holds the chairmanship of the Pacific Islands Forum," so "the United States calls for the restoration of Fiji's independent judiciary and the rights to free speech and assembly that are essential to the country's return to democracy."

The burst of toughness left the reporters in the room perplexed.

> REPORTER: Exactly what's the U.S. connection there? The government of Fiji expels diplomats from Australia and New Zealand, and you care because—
> KELLY: We care because we care about the restoration of democracy in Fiji. Last April, they—the president abolished the constitution—
> REPORTER: Yeah.
> KELLY: and dismissed all judges and constitutional appointees and imposed emergency rule.
> REPORTER: Yeah, that happened. But the operative word being there *last when*? Operative words? Last—
> KELLY: April.
> REPORTER: April, okay. And so—
> KELLY: I mean, we have an interest in democracy returning to Fiji.
> REPORTER: Well, I understand. But what does the expulsion of the diplomats from Australia and New Zealand have to do with the restoration of democracy?
> KELLY: It was—we consider it be an unjust act to expel them out of the country.

It's encouraging that the Obama administration can get tough with someone—or someone other than Israel, Wall Street CEOs, and Dick Cheney—even if it's with a nation that boasts the population of Rhode Island and a GDP of $3.5 billion, less than Americans spend annually on cat food.

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But the Obama administration had no substantive response to the Tehran violence or the silenced protesters' message.

Earlier in the week both President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had expressed hope that the Iranian regime would reverse three decades of antagonism and rejoin the community of civilized nations. Clinton, speaking to reporters in Morocco, particularly wished that Iran would accept an offer from the IAEA to ship some of its low-enriched uranium to Russia to show that Iran "does wish to cooperate with the international community and fulfill their international responsibilities."

The White House then sent out a statement commemorating the 30th anniversary of the takeover. It began, delicately, in the passive voice. "Thirty years ago today, the American embassy in Tehran was seized." (It was apparently too provocative to say by whom.)

> The 444 days that began on November 4, 1979, deeply affected the lives of courageous Americans who were unjustly held hostage, and we owe these Americans and their families our gratitude for their extraordinary service and sacrifice.
>
> This event helped set the United States and Iran on a path of sustained suspicion, mistrust, and confrontation. I have made it clear that the United States of America wants to move beyond this past, and seeks a relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran based upon mutual interests and mutual respect.

There are other reasons for the suspicion, mistrust, and confrontation, of course. Iran killed hundreds of U.S. Marines in a terrorist attack in Beirut in 1983. Iran sponsored and trained the terrorists who killed 19 American soldiers at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996. Iran harbored senior al Qaeda leaders in the months after September 11, 2001. It is training, arming, and funding the terrorists fighting U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. And last week Iran was caught red-handed delivering weapons—hundreds of tons of arms—to terrorists.

Mutual respect?

And there are brand new reasons for suspicion, mistrust, and confrontation. In late September, the world learned that Iran had constructed a secret uranium enrichment facility at Qom. In announcing the breach, Obama noted: "This is not the first time that Iran has concealed information about its nuclear program." Yet he went on to affirm his commitment "to serious, meaningful engagement with Iran to address the nuclear issue" through the international community.

Then, late Thursday came a bombshell report in the *Guardian*: The International Atomic Energy Agency has evidence that the Iranian regime had been working on an advanced design for a nuclear warhead. If perfected, the "two-point implosion" device would allow the Iranians to build smaller bombs with higher yields, which are easier to load and deliver by missile. If Iran's nuclear program were peaceful, as the Iranian government has repeatedly proclaimed (and virtually no one believes), there would be no reason for this kind of work.

The U.S. intelligence community has had this information for weeks, according to several officials. The Senate Select Intelligence Committee was briefed on October 22 and the House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee on October 29. The new information strongly suggests that Iran did not suspend its entire nuclear weapons program in 2003 as the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iran claims.

So on two separate occasions in the past two months, Obama publicly called for an end to the "mistrust" between Iran and the United States even as he was privately being presented with fresh intelligence showing that Iran has been lying about its nuclear weapons program and its intentions.

Obama's passivity is beginning to frustrate even members of his own party. Last week, the Senate Banking Committee unanimously passed a measure that would give the president more authority to impose harsh sanctions on Iran's importing of gasoline and other refined petroleum products. "It is clear that an overwhelming bipartisan majority in both houses of Congress now supports the imposition of tough new sanctions on the government of Iran," said Senators Evan Bayh, Joe Lieberman, and Jon Kyl in a joint statement. The legislation has 76 cosponsors in the Senate, including 38 Democrats. But the White House has not endorsed the measure.

The French are growing impatient, too. A month ago, French president Nicolas Sarkozy chastised Obama for his dithering on Iran. Then last week, in an interview with the *New York Times*, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner accused the Obama administration of avoiding the hard decisions on Iran. "Our American friends ask us to wait until the end of the year," he said. "It's not us." Kouchner told the *Times* that the White House wants to give Iran an opportunity for more negotiations. "We're waiting for talks, but where are the talks?"

There is only so much toughness to go around. And the Obama administration prefers to focus on the growing global threat from Frank Bainimarama, Fijian strongman. ♦

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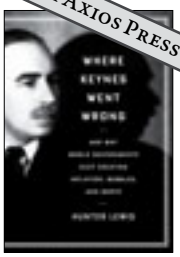

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The Swedish Way

A surprising model for Chicago's crackdown on prostitution. BY MARK P. LAGON

Improbable though it may sound, the sheriff of Cook County, Illinois, is taking a page from the Swedish welfare state in revising his approach to the problem of prostitution. Loudly applauding his eight-month-old experiment is End Demand Illinois (EDI), a coalition of nonprofits that aims to extend the reform statewide and eventually see it replicated across the country.

What Sheriff Tom Dart has done is shift enforcement resources from the supply side to the demand side: from arresting (and releasing and rearresting) forcibly prostituted women and girls to arresting pimps and johns and impounding their cars, while directing the prostituted females to social services. (Last week a U.S. district judge threw out another part of Dart's new strategy: a lawsuit against Craigslist for the hazard created by its online want ads offering "erotic" and "adult" services—some 13,000 ads a day.)

It is too soon to say what effect this policy reversal will have in the Chicago area. But supporters (including the nonprofit I head) point to the success of a similar reform in Sweden that already has a track record.

In 1999, Sweden criminalized the purchase of sexual services. Offenders face a fine or up to six months in prison, while pimps and other traffickers face incarceration for up to 10 years. Prostituted women, meanwhile, are not prosecuted but directed to social services designed to help them develop alternative means of support and recover from their dehumanizing experience. Some are provided legal services. Foreigners are encouraged to participate in trafficking investigations and prosecutions; those who decline are returned to their country of origin after 30 days.

The rationale, in the words of Thomas Bodström, a former Swedish minister of justice, was that "as long as men think they are entitled to buy and use women's and girls' bodies, human trafficking for sexual purposes will continue."

Within five years of the law's enactment, the number of trafficked persons in Sweden had declined significantly. In October 2004, Gunilla Ekberg, Sweden's top anti-trafficking official, wrote:

> In 1999, it was estimated that 125,000 Swedish men bought about 2,500 prostituted women one or more times per year. Of these women, approximately 650 were street prostituted. [Since then], the number of women involved in street prostitution has decreased by at least 30 percent to 50 percent, and the recruitment of new women has come almost to a halt.

With demand dampened, the market for prostitution had to adjust. In the first three years of the new regimen, the number of prostituted persons in Sweden (population then 8.8 million) tumbled from 2,500 to 1,500, according to Ekberg. Compare this with an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 prostituted persons in Finland (population 5 million) and 5,000 just in Oslo, the capital of Norway (population 4.3 million). Not surprisingly, Norway went on to adopt Swedish-style laws.

Sweden's apparent success has elicited some counterclaims. Some critics contend that in practice too few johns are being punished. Some health care experts have cited an increase in the proportion of prostituted women with sexually transmitted diseases. Marianne Eriksson, a former member of the Swedish Left party who held a seat in the European Parliament, observed, "The customers who used to buy sex occasionally have stopped doing so, but the 'regulars' are still there; they are the ones who … are more likely to be violent." If true, however, these increased proportions exist within a significantly shrunken universe of prostituted females.

In the United States until recently, human trafficking was mistakenly assumed to be a problem primarily plaguing the developing world. With an estimated 14,500-17,500 people trafficked into the United States annually, however, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimating as many as 100,000 U.S. minors currently caught up in the sex trade, there has been a concerted effort to direct attention to our domestic problem.

Until now, targeting supply has been the prevailing approach of law enforcement. But this neglects the plight of the victims of commercial sex. A study by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless of 235 women in Cook County Jail on October 31, 2001, found that "82 percent of the women had been physically assaulted; 83 percent had been threatened with a weapon; [and] 68 percent had been raped while working as a prostitute." Not only is the new policy intended to direct appropriate care to these women, whose human dignity has been grossly affronted, but Sheriff Dart expects it to save money: He says social services will cost less than the unending cycle of arrest, release, and rearrest. The Cook County fund from fines of arrested johns is already netting $30,000 a month (from an average of 75 johns) for survivor outreach and victim services, according to EDI's leader, Samir Goswami.

If Dart is right and the Swedish model is successfully transplanted to Cook County, supporters like End Demand Illinois will see to it that other states take notice. ♦

Mark P. Lagon is the executive director and CEO of Polaris Project, an anti-human trafficking nonprofit. He was ambassador-at-large to combat trafficking in persons at the U.S. Department of State, 2007-2009.

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The Palin Persuasion

A case for the new populism

By Matthew Continetti

If Sarah Palin visits Nashville on her book tour, she really ought to stop by the Hermitage. Andrew Jackson's plantation is a lot more than a beautifully restored example of Greek Revival architecture and design. It's also a monument to the seventh president's democratic legacy—of rule by the people, of competitive commercial markets, of entrepreneurial individuals lighting out to the territories. It's a legacy to which Palin is heiress. And one she ought to embrace.

To be sure, by today's standards, Jackson's record is mixed. He was a slaveowner whose Indian policy was nothing less than cruel. His war on the Second Bank of the United States had some dreadful economic consequences. But, when we look at Jackson today, the positive traits stand out. More than any other politician of his era, he aligned himself with the common man against self-dealing elites. Lacking formal education, he nonetheless understood that incumbents, whether in the market or in politics, raise barriers to entry in order to protect their positions. And because he sought to unsettle those entrenched interests, Jackson was at the vanguard of a spirited popular upheaval.

The Jacksonian era was the first populist moment in American politics. But it wasn't the last. There is something about the structure of American democracy that encourages periodic upsurges in popular opinion directed at nogoodniks on the East Coast. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Democratic congressman and thrice presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan rallied his followers against agglomerations of power in New York and Washington. In Jackson's time, the bad guys had been Nicholas Biddle, his bank, and supporters of the tariff. In Bryan's time, the bad guys were the corporate monopolists who squelched individual risk-taking and their bag-men in the legislature whose monetary and trade policies favored big business over the small farmer.

If you believe—as Jackson, Bryan, and Reagan did—that left to their own devices Americans will create a free, just, and prosperous society, the task of politics is simple. Identify the obstacles impeding the American spirit and eliminate them.

Bryan's reputation, like Jackson's, has pockmarks. He was sympathetic to the Ku Klux Klan. He prosecuted Darwin's theory of natural selection in the heavily publicized Scopes "monkey" trial of 1925. The elites of Bryan's time certainly hated the prairie populist. To them, he was an ill-mannered dunce from the boonies and his supporters nothing more than a rabble. Such anxiety was understandable. Bryan was a rebel. He liked to quote Jackson's adage of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none." He didn't want to overturn the government, but he did want to ensure that government lived up to its duty to "protect all from injustice and to do so without showing partiality for any one or any class." In Bryan's view, the nation's elites had grown complacent. Irresponsible. In their lust for power, they endangered the American ethos of equality of opportunity.

Over the last century, the popular energies that fueled Jackson and Bryan shifted to the right side of the political spectrum. Increasingly, the public directed its animosity at the bureaucratic and governmental elites who robbed ordinary folk of liberties in the pursuit of "social justice."

Matthew Continetti is the associate editor of The Weekly Standard. *His* The Persecution of Sarah Palin: How the Elite Media Tried To Bring Down a Rising Star *is published this week by Sentinel Books.*

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At the judges who designed busing schemes that disrupted neighborhood schools. At government-induced inflation and high marginal tax rates that destroyed savings and prevented the taxpayer from spending his earned income as he saw fit. At regulatory agencies that micromanaged the trucking, airline, power, and telecommunications sectors to the detriment of competition, innovation, and affordability.

For the last quarter century, right-wing populism, often infused with social conservatism, has been the most demonized force in American politics—and also the most interesting and dynamic. When the historian Michael Kazin wrote his 1995 book *The Populist Persuasion*, he counted Ronald Reagan among Bryan's heirs. These days, references to Bryan show up in unexpected places. Kazin notes that Bryan's second-favorite book (the first was the Bible) was *The Jefferson Cyclopedia*, a collection of the third president's thoughts organized by topic. When you google "Jefferson Cyclopedia" today, the first link doesn't take you to the Democratic party. It takes you to the Campaign for Liberty, a Ron Paul group.

In this country, whenever the public concludes that elite behavior is opaque and self-interested, a popular reaction ensues. In part, Barack Obama was elected president because of widespread discontent with the way Washington had managed its basic roles of fighting wars and maintaining the financial system. But Obama, who had the common touch during the campaign, has governed as an elitist. He's dismissed the populist revolts against his policies. And so Americans continue to look at New York and Washington with suspicion. Trust in government remains low. The president's job approval rating is around 50 percent. Congressional approval is at a dismal 21 percent.

When the average American looks at the headlines, he sees the government bailing out large, failed, politically connected enterprises even as the unemployment rate rises to 10 percent. He sees the Obama administration exaggerating the role its fiscal stimulus has played in reviving the economy, even though unemployment is higher than the administration's models predicted. (The average American also understands that there is no way to measure the number of jobs the White House has "saved.") He sees the president and Congress eager to pass a costly health care bill against the public's wishes; businesses funding Democratic campaigns so as not to be punished; the rich increasingly voting Democratic. In short, he sees a river of power and wealth flowing inexorably to Washington, D.C.

The public's negative reaction to Beltway profligacy has been visceral. The government is shoveling money to powerful interest groups, and the man on the street feels left out. In September, the Democratic pollster Peter Hart asked registered voters who they thought had benefited most from the Obama administration's economic policies. Sixty-two percent said the main beneficiary had been the "large banks." In contrast, 65 percent said the "average working person" and "small businesses" *hadn't* been helped. Seventy-three percent said "my family/myself" hadn't been helped.

Populist leaders have held very modest views of government. 'Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government,' Andrew Jackson wrote in his veto message killing the Bank of the United States. 'Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth cannot be produced by human institutions.'

Public opinion registers a widespread skepticism of government and elite decision-making. The percentage of voters who say that government is doing too much has risen to 49 percent. The percentage of voters who say that government should "worry more" about keeping the deficit low has risen to 62 percent. When pollsters ask voters what their priorities are, the economy is always the number one answer, but the deficit and national debt are not far behind. In the September NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll, for instance, the deficit was voter priority number three. These worries are more than punctilious accounting. They relate to larger concerns over the government's unchecked fiscal power and its right role in American society.

What's most interesting about the popular ferment is that it transcends party. The number of self-identified independents has risen as the number of Democrats and Republicans has declined (in the GOP's case, to a generational low). About twice as many people call themselves "conservative" as "Republican," which means that a large chunk of potential Republican voters are alienated from the national party. We saw this divergence at play in the fight over the populist candidacy of conservative Doug Hoffman in New York's 23rd Congressional District. We see it in the ongoing debate over whether populist talk radio is good for the GOP's electoral prospects.

Above all, the public is dissatisfied with the solutions that both parties have to offer. But, because today's populists lack institutional support, and because they don't have a programmatic agenda, they vent their frustrations in disorganized ways. The left-wing populists rail against CEO

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compensation, bank bailouts, and lobbyist influence in government. The right-wing populists attack the auto bailouts, government spending, and Obamacare. There is no central authority directing the tea party protestors. There was no single leader who ordered the 9/12 taxpayer march on Washington. Instead, you have multiple voices, with overlapping (and sometimes contradictory) antagonisms, agendas, and priorities.

The upshot is a creative and unregulated political marketplace. The most compelling figures and ideas prosper. No one has a dominant position. But it's also clear that what Michael Barone has called the "balance of enthusiasm" in politics is now squarely on the right. And yet, like all markets, the political trading post is prone to bubbles, excesses, rumors, and even the occasional conspiracy theory.

All of which creates a gigantic opening for a politician to display imagination and leadership. An opportunity for a figure who will separate the good populism (championing free-enterprising individuals) from the bad (concocting loony theories and vilifying "enemies of the people"). Someone who will give voice to the millions who don't want government aggrandizing the powerful; who don't want government risking dangerous fiscal imbalances; who *do* want public policies that create the conditions for a general prosperity. Someone, in other words, who can play the same role in contemporary politics that Jackson, Bryan, and Reagan did in the past.

She lives in Alaska.

The similarities between Jackson, Bryan, Reagan, and Sarah Palin are striking. This is not to say that they are alike in every respect. Nor is it to say that Palin's achievements to date rank with the others'. And, of course, American populism is a deep and complex tradition. But it's nonetheless true that a couple of traits span the centuries and unify these four political figures. The first is the reaction they provoke among the elites of their age—what one might call the "Coonskin Cap Critique." The second is their advocacy of dispersed power, open markets, and American individualism.

Elites regard challenges to their authority with condescension and contempt. They routinely underestimate the capacities of populist leaders. They mock their enemies as uneducated provincials who lack expert knowledge and therefore have no place interfering in politics. They contemptuously refer to the supporters of populist politicians as an ill-kempt and dangerous mob.

When Andrew Jackson's supporters flooded the capital to celebrate their hero's ascent to the presidency, elite opinion was aghast. In his *Andrew Jackson*, H.W. Brands quotes a D.C. resident writing,

> To us, who had witnessed the quiet and orderly period of the Adams administration, it seemed as if half the nation had rushed at once into the capital. It was like the inundation of the northern barbarians into Rome, save that the tumultuous tide came in from a different point of the compass. The West and the South seemed to have precipitated themselves upon the North and overwhelmed it.

Supreme Court justice Joseph Story was equally shocked: "The reign of King 'Mob,' seemed triumphant," he lamented.

The press of William Jennings Bryan's time saw the same thing. They called his supporters revolutionaries. Anarchists. Socialists. Dangers to the republic. In one editorial cartoon, Bryan is portrayed as a snake. In another, he's portrayed as an unruly little boy showing off the ugly contraption he's built—the populist Democratic party—to a worried Uncle Sam.

When the Reagan era rolled around, the Gipper's conservative supporters were "right-wing extremists" engaged in a racist "backlash." Later, "angry white men" brought Newt Gingrich to power in the 1994 Republican Revolution. When Sarah Palin-loving activists held anti-big government tea parties and engaged in rowdy behavior at congressional town halls in the summer of 2009, Democrats took out the carving knives once more. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer wrote of an "ugly campaign" that was "simply un-American."

The advocates of the Coonskin Cap Critique love to tar their opponents as dangerous zealots. The *Philadelphia Monthly* likened Andrew Jackson and his followers to "Peter the Hermit" and "his rabble of Christian vagabonds." Nicholas Biddle, head of the Bank of the United

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States, described Jackson's veto message killing the bank as "a manifesto of anarchy, such as Marat and Robespierre might have issued to the mob." To H.L. Mencken, William Jennings Bryan was the "Fundamentalist Pope" who represented everything the Sage of Baltimore disliked about America. During the 1980 presidential campaign, liberals sought to portray Ronald Reagan as an ideologue and lunatic who risked plunging the world into armageddon. In one editorial, the *Nation* declared, "We believe that a Ronald Reagan victory increases the chances for nuclear war."

Last year in *Newsweek*, Jon Meacham wrote that "Palin's populist view of high office" is "dangerous." Then, when Palin brought up Barack Obama's association with William Ayers on the campaign trail, the pundit tribe went nuts. Bill Maher likened a Palin rally to a "hatefest." E.J. Dionne speculated that John McCain may have "become the midwife of a new movement built around fear, xenophobia, racism, and anger." The *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Andrew Greeley wrote that Palin was "a racist with her eye on the White House."

The elite's great fear is that their supposed intellectual inferiors might rule them. John Quincy Adams described Jackson as "a barbarian and savage who could scarcely spell his own name." The journalist Charles Willis Thompson wrote of Bryan, "He did not merely resemble that average man, he was that average man." (Even historians can't help taking shots at Bryan's intellectual ability. His "capacity to convince himself," Richard Hofstadter wrote, was "probably the only exceptional thing about his mind.") Michael Kinsley pronounced Reagan "not terribly bright." Nicholas von Hoffman found it "humiliating" that "this unlettered, self-assured bumpkin" had been elected president. To William Greider, Reagan was a "hopeless clown."

It's Pavlovian: Whenever the arbiters of educated opinion witness the emergence of a populist leader, they spew insults. Sarah Palin has been called—among many, many other things—a "bantamweight cheerleader" (Maureen Dowd), an "airhead" (Charles Wohlforth), an "idiot" (Victoria Coren), a "character too dumb even for daytime TV" (Matt Taibbi), a "puffed-up dimwit with primitive religious beliefs" (Taibbi again), and a "white trash trophy wife wearing glasses so she looks intellectual" (Catherine Deveny). Palin's opponents will go to any lengths to prove that she is stupid. They've forged her SAT scores. They've prank-called her posing as foreign leaders. They tout every rumor or myth that fits into their world view and dismiss all contrary evidence.

At root, the Coonskin Cap Critique is about the battle between the country and the city. Jackson's strongest supporters were small landowners on the Appalachian frontier finally able to exercise the franchise. Bryan's were the indebted prairie farmers who took a hit during an era of falling agricultural prices. By the age of Reagan, America was transitioning rapidly to a service economy, and most Americans lived in cities and suburbs. The geographical frontier had closed. But the imaginative frontier—the beckoning American horizon of innovation and enterprise—remained.

Intellectuals belittled Reagan because he believed in this frontier of the imagination. Cosmopolitans detested him because he represented the provincial folkways of small town America. In a 1980 *Nation* essay, E.L. Doctorow wrote that Reagan was the product of

> such towns as Galesburg, Monmouth, and Dixon—just the sorts of places responsible for one of the raging themes of American literature, the soul-murdering complacency of our provinces, without which the careers of Edwin Arlington Robinson, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, and Willa Cather, to name just a few, would never have found glory. The best and brightest fled all our Galesburgs and Dixons, if they could, but [Reagan] was not among them.

Twenty-eight years later, in describing Sarah Palin's Wasilla,

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the journalist Heather Mallick wrote that "small towns are places that smart people escape from, for privacy, for variety, for intellect, for survival. Palin should have stayed home."

The antiprovincial, antipopulist critique is not only perennial. It's indestructible.

Because Andrew Jackson was the founder of the modern Democratic party, we have a tendency to look at him through big-government eyes. We draw a line that starts with Jackson, runs through Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, and FDR, and ends up at Barack Obama. But the facts are more complicated than that. Jackson and Bryan were representatives of an American system where self-made men reaped the fruits of their labor without government meddling.

There's a connection between a faith in the democratic wisdom of the crowd and support for free markets. Jackson and Bryan didn't feel that government should play favorites or manipulate society according to intellectual fashions. They felt it should level the playing field so that men of all stations, possessed with initiative and enthusiasm, could thrive in commercial society. As Richard Hofstadter wrote in the *American Political Tradition* (1948), like the Jacksonians, "Bryan felt that he represented a cause that was capable of standing on its own feet without special assistance from the government. The majority of the people, he declaimed, who produced the nation's wealth in peace and rallied to its flag in war, asked for nothing from the government but 'even-handed justice.'"

Bryan's supporters were called revolutionaries. Anarchists. Socialists. Dangers to the republic. In one editorial cartoon, he is portrayed as a snake. In another, he's an unruly little boy showing off to Uncle Sam.

Ronald Reagan possessed a similar optimism about the individual capacities of the American people. His basic faith in American decency—his democratic faith—was more than a personal tic or a political tactic. It was one of the pillars of his philosophy. It gave him the courage to dismiss moral equivalence in foreign policy and challenge Democratic shibboleths. If you believe—as Jackson, Bryan, and Reagan did—that left to their own devices Americans will create a free, just, and prosperous society, the task of politics is simple. Identify the obstacles impeding the American spirit and eliminate them.

Is tight money dampening economic growth? Kill the national bank. Are tariffs depressing farm wages? Reduce them. Is inflation robbing the middle class and high taxes limiting investment? Squeeze out inflation and lower the tax rates. The people will take care of the rest.

In the past, populist leaders have understood that when large organizations—corporate or governmental—exercise power, the main beneficiaries tend to be large organizations. The populist therefore aligns himself with the folks who aren't displayed in portraiture. He's on the side of the small businessman and the ordinary individual. "When the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages, artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer, and the potent more powerful," Jackson wrote in his bank veto message, "the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers—who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government."

Likewise, the 1908 Democratic party platform, with Bryan as the nominee, stated: "'Shall the people rule?' is the overshadowing issue which manifests itself in all the questions now under discussion." Among other things, the platform attacked "the heedless waste of the people's money." It called for free trade and the "reduction of import duties." It favored the "election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people." Later in the 20th century, President Ford would nod to the populists when he said, "Here, the people rule."

In a 1978 radio commentary that he wrote while overlooking traffic from a hotel room window, Reagan distilled the populist belief in individual ability. "They are not 'the masses,' or as the elitists would have it, 'the common man,'" Reagan said of the people driving cars on the highway below. "They are very uncommon. Individuals, each with his or her own hopes and dreams, plans and problems, and the kind of quiet courage that makes this whole country run better than just about any other place on earth." Reagan's mission was to remove the obstacles that prevented these men and women with "quiet courage" from realizing their potential.

Populist leaders have held very modest views of government. "Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government," Jackson wrote in his bank message. "Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth cannot be produced by human institutions." In Bryan's view, government was so easily corrupted that it needed to be subject to constant democratic renewal. "The conscience of the nation," the 1908 Democratic platform stated, "is now aroused to free the Government from the grip of those who have made it a business asset of the favor-seeking corporations." Reagan

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famously likened government to a baby—"an alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other."

And Palin? Time and again, she has run against elites who, in her view, are ignoring the public interest. She overthrew a three-term incumbent mayor of Wasilla because he wasn't as conservative as the people he represented. She used sales tax revenues and bond issues to help the town grow into a thriving suburb. She knocked off a Republican energy commissioner, a Republican attorney general, and an incumbent Republican governor because she felt that they were helping themselves and their friends and not the Alaskan people. As governor, she passed a sweeping ethics reform, changed the tax code so Alaskans got their fair share of oil revenues, and introduced competition and transparency into the construction of a natural gas pipeline.

Palin has an intuitive faith in builders and traders, in hockey moms and plumbers. She is clearly on the side of competitive, entrepreneurial capitalism. But she hasn't spent much time on the national stage. Nor has she tied her pointed criticisms of the Obama agenda and the liberal media to a larger argument about how ordinary people with common sense can rescue the American economy and revitalize American democracy. Palin has Jacksonian instincts, but she still hasn't forged her own political persuasion. Time to add flesh to the bone.

Reagan campaigns for governor of California, 1966

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For example, take energy policy. Last week, when Joe Biden traveled to upstate New York to campaign for Democratic congressional candidate Bill Owens, the vice president took aim at Sarah Palin. "The fact of the matter is that Sarah Palin thinks the answer to energy was 'drill, baby, drill,'" Biden said. "No, it's a lot more complicated, Sarah, than 'drill, baby, drill.'"

A good sign of condescension is when someone tells you that "things are more complicated" than you think. In truth, as Palin pointed out on her Facebook page later that day, she has "always advocated an all-of-the-above approach to American energy independence." It was, moreover, Biden and not Palin who was treading dangerous policy ground. Palin's positions align squarely with the American people's. In an August ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, for instance, almost two-thirds of respondents supported more oil and gas drilling. A 52-percent majority favored building more nuclear power plants. A similar majority supported additional coal mining. Fifty-one percent wanted "more power plants that burn oil, coal, and natural gas." And another two-thirds favored constructing nuclear power plants within 50 miles of their homes.

The popular and sensible approach to energy policy is obvious. Remove the restrictions on offshore oil exploration—if Obama thinks it's fine for Brazil to drill offshore, why can't the United States? Lower tariffs and reduce subsidies for domestically produced ethanol. Get rid of the regulations limiting the construction of oil refineries. Dismiss airy prophecies about "peak oil," "green jobs," and "limits to growth." Pledge, instead, that Americans will have access to as much of the cheapest, cleanest energy they need to stimulate the economy. Palin is right. No limits. "All of the above" is best.

Or take health policy. In the tradition of Jackson, Bryan, and Reagan, Palin could point out that the price of health care is rising because the market in health care is broken. When you buy insurance in the individual market, you don't receive the same tax break as large corporations who buy group plans for their employees. Instead of one, more-or-less free market for health insurance, there are 50 heavily regulated state markets. The mandates for insurance that state governments impose—guaranteed coverage for hair plugs or *in vitro* fertilization, for instance—increase prices. And since an individual cannot shop for insurance across state lines, a young, healthy person in mandate-manic New York cannot buy a low premium, high-deductible plan on offer in lightly regulated Utah.

Meanwhile, state and federal government, which accounts for a large (46 percent in 2006) and growing portion of national health spending, uses its monopoly power to bid down the price of the medical services it purchases,

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and thereby raises costs for everyone else. Medicare fraud is rampant. Defensive medicine increases expenditures. And doctors and hospitals are under no obligation to share prices with consumers until after services are rendered—which means that patients cannot shop around for the most affordable treatments.

What's a populist to do? Trust in the commercial ideal, and dismantle the regulatory barriers to true competition and innovation in the health care marketplace.

Next, consider the financial sector. The government is doing its best to prop up failed giants at the expense of competition and innovation. Held to the standards of the marketplace, companies like GM, Chrysler, AIG, GMAC, and Citi probably would disappear. They'd be bought and sold, carved up into little pieces, and the overpaid CEOs who made bad bets would lose their jobs.

Instead, these firms are on government life-support. Hundreds of billions in taxpayer money is propping them up. The dollars keeping GM alive and UAW workers employed are dollars that could be spent more productively elsewhere. The dollars enriching Vikram Pandit and his cronies are being financed by Americans who aren't even born. Worse, rather than bury the idea of "too big to fail," the Obama regulatory scheme would enshrine it. The administration seems bent on repeating the same mistakes that Japan made in the 1990s, when political favoritism triumphed over regulated capitalism. The result was the zombie banks that haunt the Japanese economy to this day.

Ronald Reagan had an optimism about the individual capacities of the American people. His basic faith in American decency was one of the pillars of his political philosophy.

Jackson, Bryan, and Reagan would be furious at the way the financial crisis has been handled. They would want to break down the ossified constellations of power. They'd want to let new businesses replace the old.

Step one is to set a timeline for withdrawal from the bailout state. Policymakers need to be clear that they have no intention of maintaining these huge transfers of wealth for much longer. Rather than micromanage government-owned banks and auto companies, they need to focus on weaning them off the federal teat. For the banks, a complicated and technocratic regulatory scheme isn't necessary. A few simple rules that separate the solvent banks from the insolvent would suffice.

Feeling outrage and impotence over the actions of Wall Street bankers and government regulators is natural and understandable, Palin could say. But the answer isn't further government control and politicization. It's using government to break apart concentrations of power—and then stepping back to watch as the market imposes its iron discipline.

Last year the public elected an inspirational leader who promised change. Barack Obama promised to open government, end insiderism, and confer no special privileges. He promised to reach across the aisle and adopt his opponents' best ideas.

This was all an illusion. As the Obama presidency has developed, people have realized that this is not the change they sought. The Treasury secretary is a tax cheat overseeing a Wall Street bailout program. The congressman in charge of the tax code is under investigation for various frauds. From auto bailouts to the stimulus to health care, the president has implemented or advocated policies of which the people disapprove.

Obama's governing style is based on personal interaction with major policy stakeholders. So, when the president formulates a policy, he brings into the White House all the titans of industry and top lobbyists who might be affected. The rule applies whether the issue is the financial system, climate change, or health care: Obama listens to and makes deals with market incumbents. The theory is that such negotiations will produce legislation that satisfies everyone involved. But whatever the benefits, the costs are all too clear: Incumbent stakeholders use government access to drive out competition, increase their leverage, and limit transparency.

In other words, Obama has rejected the tradition of Jackson, Bryan, and Reagan. He has rejected putting trust in the common wisdom and collective judgments of the American people. He's sought comfort in the "expert" knowledge of technocratic elites. Liberal Democrats in Congress set the agenda. The unions drive trade, health, and labor policy. The bankers drive economic policy. Joe Six Pack is left out in the cold.

But the elites continue to mess things up. Confidence in American institutions continues to erode. Faith in the American future continues to decline.

Is there an exit? Yes. All it would take is for a populist leader like the one in Wasilla to pick up the Jacksonian, Bryanite, Reaganite torch and deliver this simple message to Obama and the political class: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this big-government crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon the cross of Goldman Sachs. ♦

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THOMAS FLUHARTY

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France on the Hudson

It's 1973 all over again, as New York enters the ninth year of the reign of Michael Bloomberg

By Fred Siegel & Harry Siegel

In what may be best remembered as the "shrug of the shoulders" election, New Yorkers in a low-turnout stunner last Tuesday expressed their strong preference for none of the above. With three-quarters of the electorate staying home despite balmy weather, incumbent mayor Michael Bloomberg garnered just 51 percent of the vote even after spending over $100 million on saturation advertising and costly field operations in the most expensive bid for local office in American history.

Under Bloomberg, New York has experienced the collapse of its civic life. In 1989 roughly 60 percent of registered voters turned out in the mayoral election, by 2001—Bloomberg's first victory—it was down to 38 percent, and this year it hit a record low of 25 percent. That translates into 800,000 fewer voters in 2009 than in 1989, even as the city's population has grown by half a million in the same stretch. The civically engaged middle class has either left the city or withdrawn from its politics. Increasingly those that continue to play the game are the city's public employee unions and subsidy seeking real estate developers, two groups with direct financial stakes in government spending.

Call it the Al Sharpton phenomenon. In a decade of runs for city and state offices, Sharpton kept his vote total roughly constant while the Democratic party shrank around him. Bloomberg has extended that trend to the city as a whole—he'll spend what it takes to win, even as he alienates the city government from its citizens.

Gotham's political process has become so meaningless that even politicians don't bother to vote. The State Senate's two most powerful members from the city, Democrats John Sampson and Pedro Espada, skipped the primary runoff election. Less than 5 percent of voters effectively picked who would fill the only other citywide offices—public advocate and comptroller. The winners, Bill De Blasio and John Liu, immediately emerged as 2013 mayoral frontrunners.

In this mayoral election, New Yorkers were forced to choose between an incumbent of limited accomplishments and unlimited wealth who overturned the city's term limits law—twice ratified by popular referendum—to remain in the spotlight and a challenger in Comptroller Bill Thompson who wasn't able to put together the talking points of his campaign until the week before the election.

When Thompson promised to expand every city subsidized housing program, Bloomberg "countered" by vowing to leverage even more money to create subsidized housing. When Thompson said he would extend a $16 million voucher program used almost exclusively by Orthodox Jews to subsidize their day-care expenses, Bloomberg reversed himself and concurred. And so it went.

Right now the city budget is being propped up by federal stimulus money and the virtually interest-free funds being shoveled by the Fed into the coffers of Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan. This is an unsustainable situation. During the campaign, the contenders not only ignored the city's weakened economy and the fiscal storm clouds on the horizon but bid against each other to offer individual groups and broad swathes of the electorate pricey promises while saying little about how they'd pay for them with a massive budget hole looming just beyond the electoral horizon.

It's easy to see New York's civic anomie as a local matter. But this election also has national implications that both parties would do well to consider. Democrats in Congress now represent both the most affluent and best schooled districts in the United States and the poorest and least educated districts. It's a head-scratching top-bottom alliance. But what's new for the country is old hat for New York City. Forty years ago New York mayor John Lindsay—like Obama the symbol of a "new" and "transformative" politics—rode to reelection on just such an alliance, leaving the middle class out in the cold.

In part because so-called "fusion" voting allows candidates to run on multiple ballot lines, New York State has long been the trendsetter for strange political alliances. (The Conservative party candidate who forced the Republican out of the race before falling just short in New York's 23rd Congressional District is only the most recent example of how the state's third-party politics anticipates national trends.)

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The contemporary conservative movement was created not just by the Goldwater campaign of 1964, but also by William F. Buckley's 1965 run for mayor of New York. In the course of campaigning, the famously aristocratic Buckley discovered that the people who most identified with his politics were Gotham's working class Catholics. These "street-corner conservatives" were precursors of the Reagan Democrats. Similarly much of what came to be known as neoconservatism had its origins in the response of middle-class Jews to the depredations of New York City street crime and the dysfunctions of the city's welfare system which couldn't keep the streets clean despite taking citizens to the cleaners with taxes.

Bloomberg's narrow win foreshadows the Democratic party's national future. The mayor has close ties with the Obama administration—one prominent supporter reportedly called Valerie Jarrett to kindly suggest that "we stayed out of your race, now you stay out of ours"—and his low turnout triumph represents a new version of the two-party system.

When asked to define the middle class, Bloomberg offered up only one specific group—'municipal workers, 300,000 of them.'

In New York City, the traditional parties have atrophied. The Republicans exist largely as a ballot line ready to be sold—currently to the billionaire Bloomberg—while the leaderless Democrats will have gone, despite their dominance of the electoral rolls, nearly 20 years without electing a mayor. Locally neither party commands either enthusiasm or respect. In their stead comes a billionaire's party and a public sector union party. It's an exaggerated version of the national alliance between George Soros and the public sector unions that helps drive the Democrats' national agenda.

Bloomberg, a Democrat turned Republican turned independent, ran not only on the wink-wink Republican line but also on the Independence line created by fellow billionaire Tom Golisano, who made his fortune in upstate New York before the most recent round of state tax hikes sent him fleeing to Florida. Of course most of the party's nominal members think they've signed on as actual independents and have no idea they belong to a political party at all, let alone a shell ballot line controlled in New York City by the remnants of the New Alliance party, an anti-Semitic therapeutic cult. It was the Independence line that gave Bloomberg his margin of victory.

The Independence party exists because of a quirk in New York State's byzantine election laws, intended to protect incumbents (nearly half of all the ballot access suits filed nationally are filed in New York State), which allows for candidates to run on more than one ballot line. With nearly all elections in the city decided in the Democratic primaries, a second line can be an invaluable edge.

Bill Thompson, who received only sotto voce support from fellow Dems like President Obama, New York governor David Paterson, and New York City Council speaker Christine Quinn, tried to attach himself to the new political vehicle in town, the Working Families party. The party has less than 20,000 members, but thanks in large part to its very effective union field operations it has largely taken control of a Democratic party with well over 3 million members.

The city has lost more than 100,000 private sector jobs since the downturn, but the public sector has suffered neither layoffs nor a reduction in its pay hikes which are well in excess of inflation. Secure in the saddle, the unions hedged their bet. When asked to define the middle class in a debate, Bloomberg farcically offered up only one specific group—"municipal workers, 300,000 of them." The average city worker receives $107,000 a year in salary and benefits, while the median annual salary for New York families is $50,000. Some of the union leaders backed Bloomberg, while the Working Families party itself backed Thompson. No matter who won the election, the public sector unions would be winners in the next administration.

The Manhattan Institute's Nicole Gelinas points out that local taxpayer-supported spending has risen 31 percent under Bloomberg—to $41.5 billion a year, a spike of more than 20 percent in real dollars and more than the budgets of most states. Pension costs now eat up a third of the money the city takes in ($13.6 billion). Add in education spending, which has spiked 40 percent in real dollars under Bloomberg to $21.8 billion, and the city-funded part of the budget (excluding state and federal contributions) is entirely consumed by what the mayor likes to refer to as "uncontrollable" costs. They rise every year as he adds to the benefits baseline the city is committed to pay in good times or bad.

The city's record-low turnout last Tuesday was partly a matter of demography. The civic-minded middle class (especially anyone with children of school age) has headed for the exits and the promise of a better life elsewhere. According to a recent Brookings Institution study, the city has the second-smallest share of middle-income families in the nation, trailing only Los Angeles. In what was perhaps his best line of the campaign, Thompson, referring to the roughly 1 million New Yorkers who've left the city since 2000, defined the middle class as "the people who are leaving . . . squeezed out by Bloomberg's tax hikes." They have been replaced, but by new immigrants with more pressing concerns than municipal politics. And they too

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will head for the exits as soon as they move up into the middle class. The *New York Post* nicely captured the dynamic recently when it ran two stories side by side: "Tax refugees staging escape from New York" and "Bloomy sees bright future."

But New York's civic anomie is more than just a matter of demography. New York is home to a vast nonprofit sector. Civic and charitable organizations that were once largely autonomous representatives of civil society have been annexed to government by the flow of social service contracts, as well as vast private contributions from the mayor's fortune. The effect is that much of civil society is now, for all practical purposes, part of the public sector.

New York City has become France on the Hudson. Its highly centralized, highly politicized government employs one-seventh the number of federal civilian employees with less than one thirty-sixth the population of the United States at large. In New York, big government and Wall Street profits are fiscally incestuous twins. The profits enable the city to offer subsidies not only to the poor but also the middle class. It was middle class housing subsidies that triggered the 1975 New York fiscal crisis. But the cost of living keeps rising. Teachers, who've received a 43 percent increase in pay over these past eight years of Bloomberg, complain they're being priced out of New York. And no wonder, it's New York's vast public payroll (and benefits, which since 2000 have grown twice as fast as those in the private sector) that makes the city so expensive. In other words, the public-sector middle class is increasingly chasing its own tail—even as the costs of government drive away private-sector jobs.

Government in New York is now not a matter of elections but of cutting backroom deals. The levers of power are accessible only to the very wealthy, such as the real estate barons Bloomberg has favored with hefty subsidies and the generals of the public employee unions. For the vast majority of well educated and well off New Yorkers, local politics is someone else's business. The people who do bother to participate in elections have been bought in one way or another either by Bloomberg's money or by government connections. The underside of Bloomberg's generous giving, some of it to highly worthy causes, is that it taints everything he touches. Is someone supporting Bloomberg out of conviction, however weak, or out of an elegantly greased palm?

While Bloomberg's generous donations preceded his decade in politics, they spike every time he runs for election. Last year, he was the single largest charitable donor in the United States with gifts of $235 million, much of that going to groups in the city who are then put in a position where they can't offend their patron. The supporter who phoned the White House, for instance, is Geoffrey Canada, head of a nonprofit called the Harlem Children's Zone, which has received $600,000 in personal donations from the mayor. This year he spent $200 a vote to gain victory.

Bloomberg, who's asked to be judged on the performance of the schools under his leadership, has spent an additional 8.5 billion public dollars on the schools to no effect. National test scores are flat despite the torrent of spending and Bloomberg's vast PR campaign promoting the illusion of academic improvement. The mayor has to date bribed the teachers—that 43 percent increase in pay over the last eight years—to buy into his pretense of progress. But with a new teachers contract up for negotiation the price Bloomberg is willing to pay for union cooperation could be the first test for his third term. In one of his few memorable lines during the campaign, Thompson spoke of Bloomberg's claims about test score improvements as "the Enron of education."

There's a small incident that symbolizes Bloomberg's failings—and Thompson's failure to exploit them. In the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn a crack gang caught on tape making more than a 100 sales to undercover cops discovered a business more profitable and less dangerous than dealing drugs. They systematically sue the city for civil rights violations and, thanks to Bloomberg's policy of aggressively settling lawsuits rather than risk court judgments, the gangsters have raked in more than a half-a-million dollars. They are richer and the neighborhood is cowering. The story ran two days in a row on the front cover of the *Daily News*, but when asked about the problem Bloomberg replied, "That's just the real world . . . you're settling for small amounts of money compared to what they could win in a jury trial."

New York is still generous for many of the wealthy. Goldman and Morgan are turning out record profits in the midst of the downturn, and as always the lower end service economy is still churning out jobs. But jobs ladders for the upwardly mobile are few and far between. Unfortunately Thompson with his tin ear and ties to the public sector unions—he had been especially vocal in calling for raises for the Transit Workers Union that shut down the city's public transportation with an illegal strike in 2006—was unwilling or unable to effectively raise the issue of New York's bifurcated class structure. In the words of New York writer Eamon Moynihan, "It's 1973 all over again."

In the 1973 mayoral election, with a fiscal crisis around the corner, Gotham's parochial politicians, demonstrating formidable powers of self-delusion, fought among themselves to satisfy the interest groups. Then the skies opened, and the city sank into near bankruptcy. The city was rescued, in large part, by the state government. But today Albany has descended into dysfunction, and New York City is on its own. The 2009 election was a rerun of 1973, but this time around there will be far less in the way of middle-class civic capital to draw on when the crisis breaks. ♦

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As We Stand Down, Can They Stand Up?

Iraq still needs close attention from the United States

A soldier interviews a farmer for a micro-grant, Altun Kupri, Iraq, September 7, 2009.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

By Max Boot

Baghdad

One way to chart the recent course of Iraq's history is by the vehicles that American soldiers drive. When I first came here in the summer of 2003, I remember riding around in open-top, unarmored Humvees. By 2004, a spate of IEDs had made it necessary to move to up-armored Humvees, followed a few years later by heavier MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles that look as if they wandered off the set of a *Star Wars* movie. When last here in 2008, I went everywhere in a hulking MRAP.

Imagine my surprise, then, to find myself being driven in late October from Camp Victory, the main U.S. base on the outskirts of Baghdad, into the center of town along Route Irish, once notorious as the world's most dangerous road, in a lightly armored Chevrolet Suburban that could not withstand a roadside bomb. In Nasiriyah, a town in southern Iraq that was a major focus of resistance during the initial U.S. invasion in the spring of 2003, I rode into the town center without body armor in an SUV driven by the local police chief.

Clearly, despite the headlines about bombings in Baghdad, the situation has improved immeasurably, even if the

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war is not yet over. U.S. soldiers are still engaged in combat in rural areas alongside the Iraqis. U.S. Special Operations Forces are still carrying out nightly raids on terrorist leaders, though only after they have obtained arrest warrants from an Iraqi judge. That's not something they had to worry about in the past. Nor did they have to turn over suspected terrorists to the Iraqi legal system. Some of the commandos grumble that Iraqi justice is often a revolving door with culprits captured one week released the next, but they no longer have any choice but to work through the local system. The two U.S. detention facilities, Camp Bucca and Camp Cropper, are closing and their detainees are being released or transferred to Iraqi custody.

This is an indication of how things have changed since June 30 when under the U.S.-Iraq security agreement most (though not all) U.S. troops had to pull out of 27 major urban areas. In Baghdad, for instance, the number of Joint Security Stations where U.S. troops are present has declined from 200 to 15. The Americans are now required to secure Iraqi permission when they venture off-base in most instances, and logistics convoys run only at night to maintain as low a profile as possible. The chief U.S. role in many parts of the country is to provide the "enablers" that Iraqi forces lack, such as personnel skilled in bomb disposal, intelligence, reconnaissance, route clearance, and aviation.

It would be a tragedy if through sheer neglect the United States were to throw away the gains that it has given billions of dollars and thousands of lives to achieve. That doesn't have to happen.

Notwithstanding the diminished American role, which occasioned some initial confusion on both sides, violence has not risen since June 30. In many areas attacks are actually lower today, down to levels not seen since 2003. Only 9 Americans died in combat in October—still 9 too many but a far cry from the grisly totals of years past. In all, 285 people were killed in October in political violence across Iraq, a 93 percent reduction from three years ago. (There were 4,100 fatalities in October 2006, according to data provided to me by the U.S. military headquarters.) When attacks do occur they do not spur revenge killings as in the past. Baghdad is now full of life and electricity—literally. The streets are lit up at night. Stores are open, including hundreds of stores selling liquor, and the streets are full of traffic.

In and around the Green Zone (now protected by Iraqis in cooperation with Triple Canopy security contractors), the democratic process is functioning. In their typically protracted and Byzantine fashion, politicians are hashing out the terms of the next parliamentary election in January, which is widely expected to continue the trend of this year's provincial elections which saw power flowing away from Islamist parties and toward more secular and nationalist candidates.

Those who look at Afghanistan and shake their heads in despair should pay attention. The situation in Iraq was far worse in 2006-07 than in Afghanistan today, with far more people getting killed as sectarian groups were being drawn into a full-blown civil war. Two years later, those days seem like a nightmare from which Iraqis have mercifully awoken.

Yet there is no room to be complacent. Iraqis themselves are nervous about the coming American pullout. The United States still has 117,000 troops and 114,000 contractors here, but by August 2010 the figure is due to come down to 50,000 troops and 75,000 contractors. At that point U.S. forces are supposed to discontinue combat operations. Even before then the two headquarters that have run U.S. operations since 2004—Multi-National Forces-Iraq and Multi-National Corps-Iraq—will have been collapsed and shrunk into a single unit called U.S. Forces-Iraq. The Multi-National Security Transition Command, in charge of training Iraqi security forces, will disappear altogether; its commander will become one of the deputy commanders of U.S. Forces-Iraq.

By the end of 2011, the American soldiers are supposed to be gone altogether, even though by then Iraq will still have only a rudimentary capacity to defend itself from external aggression. It will not, for example, have a capable air defense system complete with fighter aircraft to intercept threats such as Iranian drones that stray across the border. As for internal security, the Iraqi Security Forces, now more than 660,000 strong, are growing in size and competence, but they are still vulnerable to determined attacks, as two major truck bombings in the heart of the capital in recent months attest. Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki, who sacked and arrested numerous security personnel after both incidents, clearly thinks that corruption is at fault—not a bad guess given how pervasive that problem remains at all levels of Iraqi government.

During the course of a trip across Iraq undertaken at the invitation of General David Petraeus, I heard numerous Iraqis of diverse political views express concern about the future of their country once they lose what one of them called their "American security blanket." Of the major

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political factions only the Sadrists remain determined to force U.S. soldiers out. "The complete withdrawal of U.S. troops is a big mistake," a police chief in southern Iraq told me. "We need our friend the U.S. forces to stay a minimum of 15 to 20 years to sustain safety and security." "If nothing more is accomplished by the time of withdrawal," echoed a police chief in the north, "there will be fighting and big violence among the people. U.S. forces are the balance between positive and negative."

Several Iraqis mentioned the example of U.S. troops remaining in Germany and Japan after World War II and suggested that the United States should undertake an equally long-term commitment in Iraq. "Leaving Iraq at this very critical period is irresponsible behavior," a centrist Shiite politician in Baghdad told me. That is a different tune from what many Iraqis, led by Prime Minister Maliki, were singing last year during negotiations on the Status of Forces Agreement, when they demanded a rapid American drawdown. But now that the drawdown is actually happening, many Iraqis are having second thoughts.

They are concerned about myriad problems ranging from the possibility of Arab-Kurd clashes to Iranian attempts to dominate their nascent democracy. The October 25 bomb blast in Baghdad which killed 155 people underlined the dangers that remain. Al Qaeda in Iraq, which claimed responsibility for this attack as well as an earlier bombing on August 19 that killed 100, has been battered but remains operational under its elusive chief, Abu Ayyub al-Masri. It is still the principal threat to the Iraqi state. But newer terrorist groups abound. The most prominent of these on the Sunni side is the Jaish Rajal al-Tariqah al-Naqshbandia (Men of the Army of the Naqshbandi Order), a group of former Baathist officers who are said to have close links with al Qaeda. They are a particular bête noire for Prime Minister Maliki and other Shiite leaders who fear a Baathist coup among Sunni military officers and accuse Syria of plotting with the Baathists.

On the Shiite side, Moktada al-Sadr's forces, once the main threat, have splintered, and Sadr himself has moved to Iran where he is studying to become an ayatollah while he licks his wounds from the defeats he suffered last year in Basra and Sadr City. But several of the Sadrist splinters remain dangerous, notably the Promised Day Brigade and the Asaib Ahl al-Haq. Even more dangerous is the Kata ib Hezbollah, a group sponsored by Iran's Quds Force that hopes to replicate in Iraq the strategy that Hezbollah has employed so successfully to carve out its own fiefdom in Lebanon.

A new backpack in a village north of Mosul, October 25

Coping with all these threats, while trying to stimulate a battered economy that remains almost totally dependent on oil, is taxing the anemic capabilities of the Iraqi government to their limit and beyond. American units assist the Iraqis not only with security operations but with basic governance tasks as well. In Mosul, for instance, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, presented me with a complicated-looking PowerPoint slide headlined "Trash Nodal Analysis" laying out what troops are doing to get garbage picked up. Such projects employ thousands of young Iraqi men who might otherwise be tempted to accept money from terrorist groups.

An even more important role is being played by the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team in Kirkuk, an oil-rich province that is claimed by Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen. These U.S. troops serve as a buffer between the Iraqi Army, which is garrisoned in the southern part of Kirkuk, and the Kurdish peshmerga militia in the north. When Iraqi leaders in Baghdad decided to send an army battalion into Kirkuk city—currently controlled by a police force led by a well-respected Kurdish general—U.S. authorities talked the Iraqis out of a move that would have exacerbated tensions and could even have led to shooting. Colonel Ryan Gonsalves, commander of the 2nd Brigade, spends a good deal of time enhancing communications between Arabs and Kurds, going so far as to invite Iraqi Army and peshmerga commanders to lunch on his base. The two sides would never have talked were it not for American arbitration. Plans are now being laid for joint patrols between U.S. troops, Iraqi Army soldiers,

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and the peshmerga to keep the peace in Kirkuk and other volatile areas of the north where tensions could flare out of control at any moment.

U.S. commanders in Baghdad count a total of 1,400 different tasks being carried out by their troops. They are trying to move many of these projects to the State Department, but the U.S. embassy has only 1,400 personnel (most of them performing administrative and support functions) housed in a new university-style campus in the Green Zone. There is no way they can perform the vast majority of tasks carried out by 117,000 troops especially because they are themselves reliant on military support which will rapidly shrink over the course of the next year. "There is no there there," one diplomat told me of the State Department operations as he described how the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams is due to fall from 19 to just 6 or 7 next year.

Making the situation even more problematic is the possibility that some Foreign Service officers will start to view a posting in Iraq as a normal embassy assignment, where the primary task is to report on, rather than to exercise influence over, local developments. Such a hands-off mindset could create trouble down the road. But U.S. diplomats seem to be getting the message: They have been intimately involved in pushing Iraqis to reach agreement on a new election law that has been held up by disputes over the status of Kirkuk and whether to adopt an "open list" system that would disclose the identity of the parliamentary candidates fielded by each party.

'We are not sure what you want,' a secular, pro-Western member of parliament told me. 'It was clear in Bush's time, but now we don't know the American position.'

But much more remains to be done. It is important not only to achieve a smooth handoff from U.S. to Iraqi forces but also to lay the foundations for a future U.S.-Iraqi strategic partnership that could become a pillar of stability in the Middle East. There is talk of a post-2011 U.S. military training mission here and joint U.S.-Iraqi exercises such as the biennial Bright Star exercise the United States conducts with Egypt and other allies. Sales of U.S. military equipment are in the pipeline. If F-16s are sold, as the Iraqis want, they will then be reliant on U.S. spare parts and support for many years to come. On the cultural side, it would make sense to bring more Iraqi students to the United States and possibly even establish a new American University in Baghdad like its predecessors in Cairo and Beirut.

But few of these ideas have been fleshed out, and they won't be until Iraq inaugurates a new government, which may not happen for many months after the elections scheduled for January. (Few politicians expect Nuri al Maliki to remain prime minister even though he is the most popular leader in Iraq: He has made too many enemies in the other political parties.)

But it is not just the Iraqi side that is holding up the steps needed to lay a firm foundation for Iraqi-American relations in the future. There is also a sense that the Obama administration isn't making Iraq a priority. Ironically, one of the few bright spots is Joe Biden, who as a senator turned against the war and sponsored an outlandish plan to break up Iraq into three parts. As vice president he has been a more positive influence as the administration's point man on Iraq, virtually the only high level official who appears to be paying attention to events here. The problem is that the administration's emphasis is on leaving, not on ensuring that the country we leave behind will be peaceful, strong, and democratic in the future. The president has even dropped talk of a democratic Iraq in favor of a "self-reliant" Iraq. Nor do U.S. officials talk any more about containing Iran and eroding its influence in Iraq. Rather the new buzzword is "balancing" Iran, on the implicit assumption that there is an acceptable level of Iranian influence here.

A number of Iraqis expressed dismay that after the August 19 and October 25 bombings, administration statements emphasized that the United States was still intent on pulling out rather than making clear America's willingness to stand with Iraq against our common foes. They are equally dismayed to see the United States reaching out to Iran, which most Iraqis, even most Shiites, see as their country's foremost foe.

"We need you to take Iraqi security responsibility seriously, but we are confused. We are not sure what you want," Mithal al-Alusi, a secular, pro-Western member of parliament, told me. "It was clear in Bush's time, but now we don't know the American position."

It would be a tragedy if through sheer neglect the United States were to throw away the gains that it has given billions of dollars and thousands of lives to achieve. That doesn't have to happen. There are still more than two years before the American military pullout is complete. Given how far Iraq has come since 2007—the year of the surge—it is obvious that a lot can change in that time. Let us hope that one thing that changes is that the administration starts paying more attention to this important country at the center of the Middle East and doing more to safeguard its future as part of a larger American security architecture in the region. ♦

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The Ayn and Only

Cult-empress or great thinker?

BY KATHERINE MANGU-WARD

Gary Cooper (right) in 'The Fountainhead,' 1948

ALLAN GRANT / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

It's not hard to imagine Ayn Rand, author of *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, at the Tea Party rallies that swept the nation this summer. She'd be smoking, of course. Stalking around in a cape and sensible shoes, this avatar of individual liberty and rationalism would accost cheerful, tubby Midwest Republicans and baffle them with her favorite greeting: "What are your premises?"

Perhaps the anti-tax, limited government Tea Partiers would recognize the stocky, intense philosopher/novelist with the large dark eyes as one of their own. She could even clamber up to the podium to address the crowd in her strong Russian accent. "Government 'help' to business is just as disastrous as government persecution," she might say, for she was fond of quoting herself. "The only way a government can be of service to national prosperity is by keeping its hands off."

Goddess of the Market
Ayn Rand and the American Right
by Jennifer Burns
Oxford, 384 pp., $27.95

Ayn Rand and the World She Made
by Anne C. Heller
Doubleday, 592 pp., $35

Ayn Rand is no longer around to mingle at political rallies, but she is increasingly present in current political debates, as her readers find parallels between 2009 America and the world of *Atlas Shrugged*, in which the creative thinkers and entrepreneurs go on strike, refusing to work in a totalitarian near-future dystopia where they are forced to labor for masses that hate and fear men of genius. A small but visible cluster of bloggers and businessmen are threatening to "Go Galt"—a reference to the book's striker-hero John Galt, who simply vanishes one day, taking an ever-larger number of the socially useful with him as the global economy crumbles.

At the Tea Parties, banners blare "Atlas Is Shrugging," and there are undeniable parallels between the current political scene and the scenario described in *Atlas*. In both cases, major transportation industries are being nationalized, government infrastructure is falling apart, unemployment is high, and protectionism is in the air. Rand's books, which have shown consistently impressive sales for decades, tallying almost 25 million copies in print, are suddenly experiencing a spike in demand. In 2008, sales of *Atlas* hit an all-time annual

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high of 200,000 copies sold. That would be a more-than-respectable showing for a new book; it's almost unheard of for a 50-year-old tome.

An additional sign of the Rand revival: the release of two new Rand biographies. Despite the fact that she has been famous for well over a half-century, these are the first biographies produced by impartial scholars. Both books follow Rand as she leaves behind a difficult childhood in revolutionary Russia (and her birth name Alisa Rosenbaum) for sunny, materialistic California. She wins a gig as a screenwriter after a memorable encounter with Cecil B. DeMille and meets her handsome husband. They chart her flirtation with politics, many missed book deadlines, and her rise to national fame with *The Fountainhead* in 1943. As she works to cement her place in history with *Atlas Shrugged*, a movement grows up around her. She begins to write nonfiction and names her philosophy of individualism and rationality: Objectivism. She conducts a clandestine affair with her much-younger intellectual heir, Nathaniel Branden, browbeating her husband and Branden's wife into assent and oaths of secrecy which they maintain until after her death in 1982. Rand dies famous, under an avalanche of hundreds of thousands of fan letters, yet bitter over broken personal relationships and unrealized political and philosophical ambitions.

Before continuing, it's worth noting that Ayn Rand would hate both of the new biographies. But she would be wrong to hate them, because both books are very good. Journalist Anne C. Heller's *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* personalizes Rand, offering gossipy details about Rand's life and loves without the usual dose of malice that taints the memoirs of Rand's onetime inner circle and designated heirs. Historian Jennifer Burns's *Goddess of the Market*—the stronger of the two—situates Rand in the 20th-century American political scene, painting her as an influential advocate for capitalism and freedom.

Both biographers are interesting women who chose to write about Rand, in part, because she was an interesting *woman*. Neither author—and this would be the real killer for Rand, who was not tolerant of dissent—is an adherent to Rand's philosophy. In fact, neither book treats Rand as a philosopher, a title she preferred in later years, or offers literary analysis of Rand as a novelist. Rand would say that they are missing the point. But in a way, it was Rand who failed to see her own significance: "Rand's Romantic Realism has not changed American literature, nor has Objectivism penetrated far into the philosophy profession," writes Burns. But "for more than half a century Rand has been the ultimate gateway drug to life on the right."

If William F. Buckley Jr. is the father of the modern conservative movement, Ayn Rand is the worldly aunt. While Buckley was busy providing for the future and setting rules for postwar conservatism, Rand breezed in, scattering cigarette ash and dollar bills everywhere. When she parted ways with the movement in disgust, she left a trail of crumpled stockings, fur-lined handcuffs, and ideological confusion in her wake. While willing to get on board with her principled and thorough denunciation of communism, conservatives have long had an uneasy relationship with Ayn Rand. Buckley more or less booted her and her growing contingent of followers out of the movement in the late 1950s. And Whittaker Chambers's review, published in *National Review* in 1957, contained the most famous (and most quotable) condemnation of her novels: "From almost any page of *Atlas Shrugged*, a voice can be heard . . . commanding: 'To a gas chamber—go!'"

But no matter how many times Rand is thrown out of political movements, she always comes back. Her followers can be found at nearly every large gathering on the right; long after communism is a dead letter, Rand keeps showing up at conservative parties. And even when she's refused admission at the front door for her obnoxious atheism, her utopian tendencies, or her insistence on her own greatness, she turns up inside anyway, smuggled in by the many people she introduced to ideas of liberty and personal responsibility.

Of course, the disdain between conservatives and Rand was mutual, as Burns ably chronicles in her book. Her imperious style, borrowed a bit from Nietzsche in the early years, and her tendency to give the cold shoulder to Objectivist apostates, made her hard to love. Rand denounced the conservative-friendly classical liberal economist Friedrich Hayek as "pure poison," primarily for his limited concessions to state planning in certain sectors of the economy. And she had harsh words for Milton Friedman as well: His casual use of the economic term "rationing" to mean "allocation" infuriated her, as did his preference for pragmatic argumentation over appeals to moral absolutes of individual liberty and reason. (Ludwig von Mises, a founding economist of the pro-market Austrian school, called Rand "the most courageous man in America," which delighted her immensely.) Her demands for ideological purity extended to atheism as well. The first time Rand and Buckley met face to face, she casually mentioned that he seemed far too intelligent to believe in God. She denounced Christianity as "the perfect kindergarten for communism." Rand's fondness for including kinky sex scenes in her novels—and her excoriation of altruism—didn't do much to endear her to Christian conservatives, either.

But there was a moment when American politics inspired Rand. The 1940 Wendell Willkie presidential campaign, which took place while she was missing one of the many deadlines for *The Fountainhead*, unexpectedly brought out her political fervor. A fierce opponent of Franklin Roosevelt, Rand became a Republican campaign stalwart, going door-to-door with a Willkie button pinned to her coat. She even went to movie theaters where Willkie newsreels were airing, and then stayed behind to answer questions.

"I was a marvelous propagandist," she later recalled.

Before her days as a Willkie volunteer, Burns writes, "Rand was suspicious of both democracy and capitalism, unsure if either system could be trusted to safeguard individual rights against the dangers of the mob." This was the moment when Rand became part of the

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American political scene, crossbreeding her self-generated individualist philosophy with the uniquely American understanding of individual rights and personal freedom. After the campaign was lost, diehards organized into grassroots-style Willkie Clubs, not unlike the Tea Parties. Rand had high hopes for the clubs as a way to keep the ideas of individualism and freedom alive. But after organizational scuffling, fundraising difficulties, and personal conflicts, she dropped out of practical politics. (Rand broke this rule only once later in life, when she was briefly enamoured with Barry Goldwater, though he soon disappointed her as well.)

With FDR back in office for a third term, Rand threw herself back into finishing *The Fountainhead*. When it was released in 1943 there was one positive and insightful review—in the *New York Times*—but most early notices were critical and dismissive. "Anyone who is taken in by [*The Fountainhead*] deserves a stern lecture on paper rationing," sniped Diana Trilling in the *Nation*. In fact, Rand *was* battling wartime paper rationing: She signed her contract days before Pearl Harbor. If negotiations had taken another week, Rand's editor later told her, such a paper-intensive project would probably have been junked. Rand trimmed out a subplot or two—something she never would have done in later years—to get the book down to 754 pages. But she still had to figure for more than her "fair share" of paper. The irony was not lost on this crusader against centrally controlled economies and egalitarianism that both were arrayed against her in a fight to convey her words to the public.

Worse still, many reviewers were complimentary for the wrong reasons. When it was released, Americans bought *The Fountainhead* in droves. But nearly everyone seemed to think it was book about architecture. Heller writes that it took "half a decade before most readers of *The Fountainhead* consciously noticed that it was a tract as well as a story," which Rand found baffling because, as she told a friend, "it's practically in every line." But appreciative letters from fans who cottoned to Rand's message came in steadily, and eventually Rand won recognition for the heavy lifting she was doing to link freedom and self-actualization to capitalism in the American mind, offering a principled and appealing alternative to the New Deal before the war, and socialism/communism afterwards.

Rand was always confident in her own talent, predicting sales of 100,000 copies for *The Fountainhead*. As it turns out, however, she was far too modest. Yet her confidence was also the reason she was shocked and hurt by the pointed way academic reviewers failed to welcome her works. Heller is particularly adept at capturing the novelist's heartache as the negative reviews poured in, and her elation at discovering the book's slow ascent to bestsellerdom.

Gerald Ford, Alan Greenspan, Ayn Rand, 1974

DAVID HUME KENNERLY / THE GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES

The months after she finished *The Fountainhead* were probably the lowest ebb of Rand's elitism. Her books are about supermen, heroes operating on an epic scale. But in *The Fountainhead*, she makes a place for the common man. In a climactic courtroom scene in which the hero, architect Howard Roark, makes a speech defending his decision to blow up a housing project, the jury consists of "two executives of industrial concerns, two engineers, a mathematician, a truck driver, a bricklayer, an electrician, a gardener, and three factory workers." The jury hears Roark's explanation of why he blew up the project—his vision had been corrupted, and it was his right as creator to also be destroyer—and acquits him. This particular crowd sounds like the folks you might see at a Tea Party—and the post-*Fountainhead* Rand might have felt at home among them after being rejected by the leftist academic elite and the gatekeepers of intellectual conservatism.

Rand wasn't alone in feeling alienated by both the left and right. The American libertarian movement of the 1960s and '70s was made possible, in part, by a generation of Rand readers looking for an individualist alternative on the American political scene. But she didn't take a shine to her strange capitalist hippie offspring, and soon returned to her previous skepticism about politics, equally scorning the unphilosophical and irrational elements of the libertarian and conservative movements.

By the 1957 publication of her second novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand was showing evidence of her pessimism about the state and the masses. She was never one to say that commercial success indicated true worth: Her heroes are often in financial trouble because the world fails to recognize what they are offering as superior. Wealth is just as often a signifier of corruption as achievement. Financial success came to Rand herself late in life, thanks in part to her decision to build an alternative delivery system for her philosophy, outside the usual worlds of academia and politics. Rand authorized her sometime lover Nathaniel Branden to establish a newsletter-publishing operation and lecture series, which proved decently profitable and supplied Rand with a steady stream of converts. After their falling-out—Branden was keeping a girl on the side—Rand passed the mantle to another follower, who has been overzealous in his protection of her papers and name.

And yet—despite critical PR blunders and excoriation from both sides of the political aisle—Ayn Rand endures. People keep buying her books and, perhaps more important, giving them to each other. Republican congressmen Paul Ryan (Wis.) and John Campbell (Calif.) give out copies of *Atlas Shrugged* to their staff. So does the head of BB&T bank, John Allison. Talk about a film version

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of *Atlas* has gotten louder in recent months. The same force that made Rand a cult phenomenon in her own time still sends people into the streets with *Atlas Shrugged* banners 50 years later. Her strange blend of populism and elitism continues to leave its mark in the right-wing world, like it or not. ♦

B&A

Closing Time

The Irish country pub is thriving everywhere except Ireland. **BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER**

Conviviality in Dublin, 1981

COTTON COULSON / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC / GETTY IMAGES

There are lots of reasons people go to pubs: to get blotto, watch sports on TV, find someone to date. But the best reason to be in a pub is that you're with your friends.

Those of us who enjoy a good pint know that moderate drinking—say, three pints in an evening—makes you happier and eager to start up discussions with someone who would be a stranger if he wasn't sitting on the next barstool. I've had all sorts of conversations, with everyone from archaeologists to film historians, that I never would have had if I didn't like beer.

The Irish have long understood that conversation is the best reason to go to the pub. They even have a term for it: *craic* (pronounced "crack"). When you're spending the evening sitting next to a crackling fire having a really good discussion, with hand-pulled pints of Guinness fueling the argument, then the Irish would say that you're having "good craic." Throw in a band playing traditional Irish melodies, and you've had a really fine evening.

A Pint of Plain
Tradition, Change, and the Fate of the Irish Pub
by Bill Barich
Walker, 242 pp., $25

Craic, however, is something that is easy to want and hard to find. Bill Barich, an experienced American author of books on horseracing and California who now lives in Dublin, has spent an entire book trying to discover the perfect Irish pub. This excellent, elegiac book shows that far too many Irish pubs aren't what they once were. The city pubs have succumbed to tourism and tackiness. And stringent drunk-driving laws, he argues, have doomed nearly all Irish country pubs to closure.

Barich explains that, when he was in college, he survived the winters in upstate New York by heading to Manhattan as often as he could. There he "wallowed in the beery charm of such iconic spots as McSorley's Old Ale House or P.J. Clarke's, and pretended I'd fetched up on the Auld Sod. The word 'Irish' soon acquired a special meaning for me. It stood for talk, drink, laughter, fun, and a release from ordinary cares."

The Irish pub, Barich explains, is an international marketing concept that you're as likely to find in Dubai or Shanghai as you are in Dublin or Cork. You can't bottle or export *craic*, but all the pieces of an Irish pub are available for sale. Diageo, the corporate parent of Guinness, can't actually sell you a pub, since in many countries (including the United States) it's illegal for breweries to own bars. But they're happy to sell the "Irish Pub Concept Business Plan," a $500 marketing manual that includes handy references to companies that can supply everything from Irish bric-a-brac to visa-approved Irish workers. And once you're ready to build your pub, Guinness will happily send you to the Irish Pub Company, which builds pubs in every style from Country Cottage to Victorian Dublin to Traditional. (Their most successful outlet, Barich reports, is the Nine Fine Irishmen pub in MGM's New York-New York Hotel in Las Vegas, which has grossed as much as $14 million a year.)

But what of the original pubs which have spawned these global copies? Barich spends much of his book visiting pubs both in Dublin and in the country. The better-known ones in Dublin, he found, were more often than not filled with tourists, many of whom were sent by the energetic authors of the Lonely Planet and Rough Guide travel books who steer the traveler to bars offering "authentic Irish experiences." But these

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pubs, too expensive for most Irish drinkers, are about as authentic as Mama Leone's or Sardi's in Manhattan. The tourists, says Barich, often end up just seeing other tourists, and then consume Guinness at five euros a pint.

These downtown Dublin pubs, says Barich, often boast of their tenuous connection with great Irish authors. They love to festoon their walls with portraits of William Butler Yeats and James Joyce, even though Yeats rarely drank and Joyce switched to red wine as soon as he could afford to. A better role model for the literature-loving drinker, writes Barich, is Flann O'Brien, who wrote such comic surrealist novels as *The Third Policeman*, a zany tale whose sales soared after the castaways on *Lost* were seen reading it. You can still visit most of O'Brien's haunts but you probably won't run into any struggling writers in them.

Barich also spends some time discussing country pubs. Of course, the most famous Irish country pub was the imaginary one featured in John Ford's classic film *The Quiet Man*. According to Barich, Ford convinced the money men to fund his project when, on an exploratory trip to the remote village of Cong, Ford saw an ancient thatched-roof cottage and began bawling like a baby.

"This is the house where I was born," Ford cried, and got the financiers to open their checkbooks. (Ford, of course, was actually born in Maine.) *The Quiet Man*, Barich writes, is emblematic of "Fairytale Ireland," the remote country villages many of us dream about living in. These villages still exist, says Barich, but the pubs are ailing because of Ireland's drunk-driving laws, which are far tougher than comparable American laws. Since you can't drive to a pub any more, Irish country pubs can only sell beer to people who can walk home—which, for remote villages, means not very many potential customers. Many Irish country pubs have closed, and the survivors have severely limited their hours of operation.

So is the Irish pub now just a marketing concept? Not quite, Barich says. There are still a few worth going to, but they're hard to find, and *very* far off the tourist trails. *A Pint of Plain* is an elegy for a vanishing Ireland. ♦

B&A

Ghost Patrol

The curious mythology of the Vietnam war.

BY ANDREW NAGORSKI

One of the oft-repeated stories among soldiers in Vietnam concerned a purported island in the Pacific where the U.S. Army would dispatch those men who had contracted incurable forms of venereal disease. To spare their families embarrassment, so the stories went, the military would inform them that their loved ones had gone missing in action—and the afflicted soldiers would never return. To this day, some Vietnam veterans remain firmly convinced that this really happened.

War Stories
False Atrocity Tales, Swift Boaters, and Winter Soldiers—What Really Happened in Vietnam
by Gary Kulik
Potomac, 304 pp., $29.95

"It is of course a false and absurd story," writes Gary Kulik, who served as a medic in Vietnam. "In my experience some young soldiers thought that their repeated cases of gonorrhea were marks of virility, rather than symptoms of long-term unpleasantness. I can easily imagine medics, who were usually older and better educated, using such a fantasy for its invigilating effects."

Kulik's wry comment about this fantasy island constitutes a rare lighter moment in an otherwise deadly serious, emotionally charged book. Anyone who grew up in the 1960s—whether he served in Vietnam, took to the streets in protest, did both, or neither—is likely to hesitate before picking up a book with the subtitle: "False atrocity tales, Swift Boaters, and Winter Soldiers—What Really Happened in Vietnam." The instinctive reaction is to ask what ideological line Kulik is peddling—and why should I, as a reader, dredge up all the political, personal, cultural, and psychological battles of that era? What more is there to be said?

The short answer is "a lot," and Kulik says it extraordinarily well. At a time when most people who lived through the war in Vietnam would rather cling to their own versions of events, disregarding anything that complicates the narrative that they've accepted in their minds as the truth, along comes a writer who refuses to settle for simple ideological answers of either the left or the right. Instead, he follows the evidence wherever it leads him, scrupulously examining the record of how American soldiers behaved when they served in Vietnam, and the stories they have been telling since they came home.

Kulik's ability to navigate and weigh seemingly contradictory evidence, coming to conclusions that will not please the ideologues of either side, flows from his own complex feelings about Vietnam. As a graduate student at Brown, he was opposed to the war and applied to be classified as a conscientious objector. But he expressed his willingness to serve in a noncombatant role in the military, and was inducted into the Army in 1969. While enjoying a cushy assignment as a writer in the Historical Unit of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he penned antiwar articles and was even arrested in a demonstration. (Because he was in civilian clothes and released quickly, his superiors didn't learn about this.)

Andrew Nagorski, vice president and director of public policy at the EastWest Institute, and the author of The Greatest Battle: Stalin, Hitler, and the Desperate Struggle for Moscow That Changed the Course of World War II, *is working on a book about Americans in Hitler's Germany.*

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In June 1970, he was shipped to Vietnam, where he served as a medic and then, somewhat to his frustration, as a clerk to the battalion adjutant. He volunteered to join a flight crew, but was rejected because of less-than-perfect vision. He was still technically a conscientious objector, but he clearly wanted to be in on the action. The war no longer looked black and white to him, nor did the warriors.

Kulik methodically sets out to debunk anything he has concluded is a lie or misrepresentation about that period. What is held to be true isn't necessarily true, he argues, even when there are Vietnam veterans claiming responsibility for particular actions. His most graphic example: The case of Kim Phuc, the nine-year-old girl who was badly burned in a napalm attack in 1972, and was famously photographed running naked in agony. She was later rediscovered by Western journalists, and in 1996, she attended a Veterans Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial in Washington. Addressing the crowd, she told them that, if she could meet the pilot who napalmed her, she would ask him "to promote peace." At that point, John Plummer passed a note to her saying: "I am THAT man."

The two embraced and Phuc said, "I forgive you." The only problem was that, as Kulik points out, Plummer was not that man. Yes, he served in Vietnam, but his entire story falls apart on closer examination. The real pilot was a South Vietnamese who had responded to an appeal for help from South Vietnamese troops under attack. So why did Plummer claim he was the guilty one? It produced invitations to appear on *Nightline*, a documentary on A&E, and countless other appearances to talk about forgiveness. That, in turn, strengthened his reputation as a minister in Purcellville, Virginia.

Kulik argues that many people—including some Vietnam veterans—have come to accept an image of the war that is heavily influenced by popular culture. Books like Michael Herr's *Dispatches* and movies like *Apocalypse Now* and *Taxi Driver* painted a picture of a war where everything goes, and soldiers routinely were crazed both on the battlefield and when they returned home. The notion of a "post-Vietnam syndrome" gained wide acceptance, with claims that Vietnam veterans suffered an unprecedented level of trauma and suicide rates.

Kulik marshals the evidence that this is wide off the mark. Partly because the military was more experienced in dealing with psychological problems during the Vietnam war than in earlier conflicts, the rate of psychological breakdown was much lower than it was in either the Korean war or World War II (11 per 1,000 troops in Vietnam as compared to at least triple that rate in Korea). A 1988 study by the Department of Veterans Affairs found that Vietnam veterans had a 7 percent lower risk of suicide than veterans of other wars.

All of which sets the context for Kulik's main interest: How true were the stories of widespread atrocities in Vietnam? Here, too, he dismisses some popular myths, like the frequently told tales of helicopter crews throwing out prisoners in flight. But the key sections of this book consist of his examination of the records of military investigations and trials, along with the stories told by Vietnam veterans, especially those in the antiwar movement.

Kulik isn't claiming that the Vietnam war didn't produce its share of atrocities, or take a heavy psychological toll on some soldiers. "I shared a barracks room with a heroin addict who would be arrested for losing it one night and firing directly into a Vietnamese settlement immediately outside our perimeter," he writes. Elsewhere, he adds, "Americans did commit war crimes in Vietnam, and even now, no one of good conscience can claim that all those war crimes have come to light."

My Lai, 1968

RONALD S. HAEBERLE / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

But his main focus is on debunking the exaggerations and outright fabrications that have contributed to the impression that the My Lai massacre wasn't some horrendous exception to the rule but typical of what happened. In particular, he takes on the Winter Soldier Investigation (WSI) that featured the most hair-raising testimonies about alleged atrocities, including the stories about tossing prisoners from helicopters and the crucifixion and skinning of others. He convincingly

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demonstrates both the absurdity of many of those claims and the dubious credentials of some of the accusers.

"The reason to expose false atrocity stories is so we can retain our outrage at true atrocity stories," he maintains.

Kulik follows up on the military investigations of several cases. The saga of what happened, the often-contradictory testimonies at the time, and the recollections of those veterans he tracked down for this book, contain an accumulation of evidence that makes some sections a slog. Still, it's this attention to detail that allows him to conclude in the cases he examines that war crimes were committed—but on nothing like the scale of popular lore. The sum total of confirmed war crime cases to come out of the WSI testimonies, he insists, is exactly one.

Kulik lauds a soldier who, he finds, spoke the truth about a war crime committed by his unit, despite intense pressure to go along with a whitewash. And he isn't about to join those who tar every veteran who protested the war and offered more sweeping judgments. While hardly a fan of John Kerry, who participated in WSI and backed its extravagant claims, he is scathing in his criticism of the Swift Boat Veterans who sought to prove that Kerry was surrounded by fake veterans making fake charges.

"The case that 'many' of those at the WSI were frauds was itself a fraud," he concludes—although he adds that many of those who later joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War "were neither veterans nor were they truly against the war."

Nothing is simple about Kulik's feelings or findings. He explains that he stands on "the narrowest of moral ledges, condemning the way we fought the war, but wishing the South Vietnamese had prevailed . . . proud of my reluctant, conscience-driven service, outraged by war crimes like the one at My Lai, but intent on exposing fake war crime stories." In other words, *War Stories* tries to provide as accurate an account as possible. Because of the intense passions on both the left and the right, this is a herculean task—but Kulik pulls it off. ♦

B&A

Paint By Numbers

New Deal art and the problems of public patronage.

BY MARTHA BAYLES

'Baseball at Night' (1934) by Morris Kantor

ART RESOURCE

"We used to see games like that in Denver."

The speaker was a petite, intense-looking Hispanic woman accompanied by her son. I could be wrong, but she did not seem like a regular museum-goer. The setting was the exhibition currently on display at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM): "1934: A New Deal for Artists," containing 56 paintings created under the auspices of the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). And the subject was an appealing work by Morris Kantor, a Russian-Jewish immigrant, entitled *Baseball at Night*.

To the average art snob, such comments are of no consequence, because they reflect what ordinary people do when confronted with works of art: they look at the *subject matter*, not the *art*. From this perspective, Kantor's painting could just as well have been a magazine illustration; that woman would still have remarked to her son, "We used to see games like that in Denver."

In America, this art-snob perspective reached a zenith of sorts in 1939, when the critic Clement Greenberg published "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," a famous essay positing two ways of looking at art: the "cultivated" way, which focuses on the formal attributes of a work and fits them into an unfolding historical process; and the "naïve" way, which simply reacts to the scene or personage being portrayed.

Greenberg gives the example of a Russian peasant looking at a picture by Ilya Repin, the great realist painter touted by Stalin as a template for Soviet

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art. With Trotsky, Greenberg believed that to serve the revolution, art had to be on the cutting edge of modernism: the avant-garde. Thus, he dismissed Repin's work as "kitsch" that "predigests art for the spectator and . . . provides him with a short cut . . . that detours what is necessarily difficult in genuine art." Repin's technique, acquired at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and honed in Paris, is so masterful that it allows the peasant to perceive "no discontinuity between art and life."

Thus, the "naïve" spectator looking at *Baseball at Night* sees only the red-dirt diamond illuminated by racks of yellow lights, the little clubhouse and radio station with windows aglow against the night sky, the players captured in classic poses anticipating the pitch, the candy-colored spectators jammed into low bleachers, the neat row of bats, the American flag, and the black-clad umpire standing with arms judiciously folded.

By contrast, the "cultivated" spectator sees Kantor's "abstract technique": the way he uses the lines of the chalked diamond, flagposts, batting cage, and long curved bleacher to pull the composition together. There must be a golden section in there somewhere, because the effect is so harmonious that the eye barely registers how absurdly small the playing field is, or how improbable it is that a bleacher would be curved. The cultivated eye is further seduced by Kantor's "painterly" style: His brushes were wet when he sketched all those lively human forms, and while the paint has long since dried, the fluidity of his deft, playful touch remains visible.

To Greenberg, these two ways of looking are all but mutually exclusive. Yet to judge by the actions of the aforementioned woman, this was not the case with her. Unlike most museum-goers, she did not plod dutifully from picture to picture, spending 2.5 seconds in front of each one. Rather she criss-crossed the rooms with smiling son in tow, stopping before all the good paintings and ignoring the rest. And her response to *Tenement Flats*, a large, brilliant canvas by California painter Millard Sheets—"Look at *that*!"—suggested an appreciation for pure "plastic values" that, according to Greenberg, is found only in the "cultivated."

That woman is hardly unique. Most people, including most art connoisseurs, find it unnatural to look at a well-wrought picture without responding to the subject it depicts. After all, Van Gogh didn't paint cow flaps, he painted sunflowers. Yet to Greenberg, any such surrender to "the vividly recognizable, the miraculous, and the sympathetic" is hopelessly reactionary. Indeed, he held that the future of humanity depended on visual art being purged of its most ancient and primal power: *representation*.

Why stake out such an extreme view? It is not enough to say that Greenberg was a Marxist. In the 1930s Marxism was the art world's dominant intellectual framework; indeed, Greenberg's critique was largely aimed at other Marxists. Within the Marxist framework, there was general agreement on two things: first, that 19th-century realism, which began in the 1850s when Gustave Courbet broke with the French Academy to include humble people among his subjects, was the quintessential bourgeois style; and second, that this bourgeois style was being overthrown by a new style emerging from the proletariat. What Marxists disagreed about vehemently—and in the Soviet Union, fatally—was the right direction for this new proletarian style. For the Trotskyists, it should have been an outgrowth of modernism; for the Stalinists, a version of realism.

By a curious accident of timing, the paintings in the SAAM exhibition were created soon after Stalin handed down his notorious edict, "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Art Organizations," which required all good socialists to purge their work of modernism and abstraction and adopt a standardized style called Socialist Realism that presented ideologically approved subjects in a manner that left no question, doubt, or mystery about their meaning. (Needless to add, Socialist Realism did not depict reality—far from it.)

The remnants of this propagandistic style can still be seen throughout the former Soviet bloc and Iraq, and its legacy lives on in China, North Korea, and every other nation where a Great Leader or all-powerful party still undertakes the work of engineering human souls. In one of history's more amusing ironies, a remarkably similar style arose during the 1930s in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, where Mussolini and Hitler followed Stalin in excoriating modernism and ordering the production of didactic, easy-to-read art that borrowed from, but swiftly debased, the techniques of 19th-century realism.

As it happens, the paintings in "1934" were produced under a benign version of the same antimodernist rule. In the United States, the political right had long distrusted modernism, not only because of its difficulty but also because many modernists were foreigners, leftists, or both. What's fascinating—and confusing—about the 1930s is that many American leftists took the same position, for a different reason. Following the Stalinist party line, they deemed modernism too challenging to serve as mass propaganda. It was this view, not Greenberg's, that informed the choice of art in both the PWAP and the subsequent Federal Art Project. It was okay to dabble in modernism, as long as the work did not stray too far from representation—and in the case of the PWAP, depicted some aspect of "the American scene."

Does this mean SAAM has mounted an exhibition of leftwing propaganda? The student of Socialist Realism will find echoes here, especially in the sections marked "Industry" and "Labor." For example, Earle Richardson's *Employment of Negroes in Agriculture* recalls the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, whose work inspired many of the public murals created under the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture, launched in 1934.

A dissenting Communist whose great talent transcended the confines of ideology, Rivera received private commissions to create murals in San Francisco, Detroit, and New York's Rockefeller Center—although that last, an ambitious work called *Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to the Choosing of a New and Better Future*, was

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destroyed after Rivera refused to comply with Nelson Rockefeller's request that he replace the face of Lenin with that of an ordinary worker.

Notably, the destruction of Rivera's mural occurred in February 1934, one month and a half after the launch of the PWAP. In today's terms, it probably had a "chilling effect" on grantees itching to put Lenin's face into their pictures. But compared with the artist-drones toiling under Communism and fascism, PWAP artists were free to paint whatever they liked, so long as they stayed within the parameters mentioned above. If some of them produced good socialist art, it's doubtless because they were good socialists. It's worth adding, though, that without the grants that kept them from starving that winter (one of the coldest on record), those artists might well have become even better socialists.

This background is essential to any reasonable understanding of America's first foray into government arts funding. But while "1934" is well worth visiting for the dozen or so fine paintings it contains, the materials accompanying the exhibition—the wall texts, catalogue, and website—are surprisingly dumbed-down. Indeed, they are worse than dumbed-down; they are evasive. With the exception of one wall text—a quote from the German-born artist Paul Kelpe to the effect that the PWAP "refused to accept 'nonrepresentational' art"—"1934" contains no references to the PWAP's antimodernist stance, and certainly no explanation of it.

Was this an oversight? I don't think so. The message of "1934," set forth by SAAM director Elizabeth Broun in the catalogue, is that artists are not "marginal 'extras' in our society" but "workers deserving of support." Recalling that the WPA was criticized for including several projects for artists, Broun quotes Franklin Roosevelt's comment: "Why not? They are human beings. They have to live."

This point is remarkably similar to the one made by the arts lobby in early 2009, when Congress was debating the inclusion of $50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. When the funds were finally voted on, the NEA's Patrice Walker Powell commented that, at last, artists were being "dignified as part of the American workforce."

To the conservative who asks how, exactly, the federal government acquired the power to confer dignity on American workers, the liberal would likely follow FDR's logic: Workers need jobs; artists are workers; therefore, artists need jobs. There's nothing wrong with this logic, except that in the United States it will fly politically only when the economy—and the nonprofit sector that has historically supported the arts—are in desperate straits. And even then, it will not fly if the artists being helped are seen as hostile to the values of ordinary Americans. The smart people behind the PWAP understood this, which is why they required grantees to paint the American scene and stick to a more or less representational style.

Robert Mapplethorpe, 1979

FRED W. MCDARRAH / GETTY IMAGES

Today, the arts lobby would like to see a restoration of the endowment's program of individual artist grants, which were cut in 1994 in response to a public outcry, led by conservatives but not confined to them, against NEA funding of artists whose work deliberately transgressed widely held standards of propriety, decency, and respect for religion.

One such artist was Robert Mapplethorpe, a handsome gay photographer who died of AIDS in 1989. In fact, Mapplethorpe never received an individual NEA grant. But the endowment did fund "The Perfect Moment," a retrospective of his work that was scheduled to open at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington a few months after his death. Along with a lot of crisp, fine-veined flower pictures (which now, thanks to the notoriety attached to Mapplethorpe's name are worth thousands of crisp, fine-veined dollars), that exhibition included the *X Portfolio*, inspired by the artist's professed interest in pornography.

In Mapplethorpe's own words: "There was a feeling I could get looking at pornographic imagery that I thought had never been apparent in art. And I thought if I could somehow retain that feeling . . . and make an art statement . . . then I would be doing something that is uniquely my own."

Hence images such as *Jim and Tom, Sausalito*, in which Jim urinates into the open mouth of Tom (or is it the other way around?) and *Self-Portrait*, in which the artist, clad (partly) in black leather, crouches with his bare buttocks toward the camera and a bullwhip sticking out of his anus.

The originality of this art statement did not impress Dick Armey, Jesse Helms, and 100 other lawmakers, who raised hell on Capitol Hill until the Corcoran, shaken by the bad publicity and warned by its legal department that because the show also contained photos of naked children it might be prosecuted under the District of Columbia's child pornography law, cancelled "The Perfect Moment." However prudent this decision may seem to the innocent bystander, it was reviled by the arts lobby as craven self-censorship.

To this day, the arts lobby is fond of noting that the Mapplethorpe exhibition had been shown without incident in Philadelphia and Chicago before coming to Washington, and that, after the cancellation, it was mounted to general acclaim at the Washington Project for the Arts. What they fail to note, however, is that all three of these venues are "contemporary," "alternative" arts spaces, patronized mostly by shockproof *aficionados*. The Corcoran, by contrast, is a major tourist attrac-

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tion adjacent to the White House that draws thousands of visitors each year, many with offspring in tow and (shall we say) ill-prepared to encounter a graphic tribute to the esoteric thrills of all-male S&M.

Recalling the constraints imposed on government-funded artists back in 1934, our innocent bystander may wonder why the NEA didn't just cope by imposing some minimal constraints on its grantees. The answer is: It tried. John Frohnmayer, the new chairman appointed by George H.W. Bush, made a half-hearted effort to enforce a congressionally mandated "anti-obscenity pledge," but all he succeeded in doing was provoking a huge blowback from the arts lobby: lawsuits, polemics, lofty refusals of grants by eminences such as Leonard Bernstein and Joseph Papp.

Next, Congress formed an Independent Commission led by John Brademas, a former Democratic congressman from Indiana, president of New York University, and longtime supporter of the NEA. That commission produced one of the most thoughtful reports ever written about government arts funding in America. But by then the culture wars were in full swing, and the endowment was suffering the death of a thousand cuts—including the virtual elimination of individual artist grants in 1994. Perhaps because this last cut was not contested by Jane Alexander, the actress who served as NEA chairman under Bill Clinton, it was accepted by the arts lobby as a necessary sacrifice to save the endowment from total destruction.

But when it came to assigning responsibility for the disaster, the dominant view has always been that a bunch of mad-dog Republicans suddenly went berserk and began attacking unsuspecting painters, actors, musicians, and poets whose only crime was to care deeply about artistic freedom. Of course, when it comes to actually dealing with those mad dogs, this view has been carefully swaddled in the NEA's usual anodyne language, a quintessentially American blend of 19th-century gentility (art as mentally improving and morally uplifting) and 20th-century boosterism (art as psychologically therapeutic and economically stimulating). This is the native tongue of all arts lobbyists, to say nothing of arts bureaucrats.

Just to cite one example from the "1934" catalogue, the Smithsonian's Roger G. Kennedy quotes FDR's remark that "one hundred years from now, my administration will be known for its art, not its relief," and interprets it to mean "we are a species that can transcend necessity. When we again breathe freely, creation renews and from creation comes—art."

Doubtless Kennedy was thinking of such inspirational works as Ray Strong's *Golden Gate Bridge*, a highlight of "1934" showing that structure partly built against the glorious backdrop of San Francisco Bay. But such lofty language sits ill with the sensibility of a transgressive artist like the late David Wojnarowicz, who fumed, after being defunded by the NEA, that the whole point of art is to make a "radical gesture" asserting the "ungoverned imagination" against "thought police," "bonehead newscasters," and (of course) a certain "repulsive senator from zombieland," whom Wojnarowicz wanted to douse "with a bucket of gasoline and set his putrid ass on fire."

Such outrage might make sense if the senator in question had been out to censor Wojnarowicz's work. There are conservatives who wish to outlaw transgressive art, but they are a tiny minority in a vast American population more opposed to censorship than ever before. The real issue was—and is—government funding, which, as stated in the original legislation, is "subject to the conditions that traditionally govern the use of public money." Chief among those conditions is that public funds be used for public purposes.

I, the taxpayer, respect the right of my fellow citizens to breathe freely, even heavily. I also respect their right to take pictures of themselves while doing so, and to display the results in an art gallery. What I don't respect is the presumption that I should pay for it unquestioningly.

The arts lobby belittles this "taxpayers' money" argument, calling it "a perfect if misleading slogan" and reiterating the existence of a firewall between the deliberations of the NEA and the meddling of politicians. This is an important principle, and in some ways, the endowment's firewall is stronger now than in the 1980s. But such professions in the total autonomy of the endowment seem a bit naïve, coming from people whose general view of politics borders on the paranoid hysteric. No firewall can ever be perfect, because government support of any enterprise is, in the long run, subject to political pressure.

When asked about this still-festering issue, the new chair of the arts endowment, former Yale Drama School professor and broadway impresario Rocco Landesman, was refreshingly candid. "I am in favor of direct grants to artists," he said. "That's what we are here for." But then he added, "Having said that, I don't think it's good form for one grantee to spoil it for everybody else by selfishly advancing [his] own agenda at the expense of the entire enterprise. . . . I don't think that we are serving anyone's purpose by going out and funding art that is of minimum merit and maximum controversy."

Well, amen. Does this mean the NEA is looking for a way to restore individual artist grants without letting the whole thing turn toxic again? To some degree, the question is moot, because no one wants to make room for a renewed grants program by terminating any of the well-received programs and activities nurtured by Alexander and her successors, Bill Ivey and Dana Gioia. And the only alternative to that would be to double the NEA's present staff and quadruple its funding, an unlikely prospect even in good economic times.

The question is also moot because while the NEA no longer funds artists directly, it does so indirectly, through its many partnerships with arts organizations in all 50 states, and it is far from clear that these local and regional groups are less immune to the charms of transgressive art than the Mother Ship sitting in the shadow of Capitol Hill.

This is the danger of the system: It is highly decentralized, with wide

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discretion exercised at many different levels by many different kinds of Americans. But this is also its beauty. If the arts lobby has been making one valid point all these years, it is that you don't get the beauty without the danger. If you try to control everything from the top, you will have a dead culture, not a living one.

At this juncture, it is probably worth noting that the NEA was never intended to replace the traditional American system of private philanthropic support for the arts. This is what made the endowment politically palatable in the beginning, and it still does. Gioia says that, in recent years, the NEA has been attracting considerable interest from European ministers of culture: "When I was chair, Europeans would lecture me about the superiority of their centralized cultural ministries, then ask why I thought our system worked so much better." Gioia also mentioned the French writer Frédéric Martel, whose *De La Culture en Amérique* (2006) argues that French cultural life would be better served by following the American model.

"We need thousands of people defining culture," Martel says about his own country. "Power should flow bottom-up, not top-down."

So what is flowing bottom-up these days? The most obvious answer is a change of attitude toward the federal government. Instead of the culture wars' slings and arrows, the Obama administration is being pelted with cool, creative ideas about how, in Landesman's words, the arts can "be part of the plans to come out of this recession."

Underlying some of these ideas is the theory, popularized by economist Richard Florida in 2003, that prosperity grows like crabgrass under the feet of the "creative class," a baggy term encompassing just about every social type—except, of course, people who are too old, too white, too straight, or too conservative to be "creative." This is not the place to repeat all the criticisms that have been leveled at Florida's facile analysis. Suffice it to say that some have come from the left, others from the right, and all have hit the mark sufficiently hard, and one is tempted to say that only an arts lobbyist could continue to find such ideas credible.

'Subway' (1934) by Lily Furedi

The arts lobby is also buzzing and tweeting with pride over how artists played a vital role in getting Barack Obama elected. No matter how often you search for the evidence behind this claim, you will turn up the same two items: The "Hope" poster by graphic artist Shepard Fairey; and the "Yes We Can" hip-hip video by will.i.am, singer for the Black Eyed Peas. Posters and hip-hop are both grassroots art forms, and, as such, they both have an affinity for political protest. What's striking about these examples, though, is that they are not about protest. Upbeat and user-friendly, they are about hero worship.

To some libertarians, this new eagerness to be of service to the government is a harbinger of totalitarianism to come.

For example, *Reason* contributor Patrick Corrielche recalls being part of an early August conference call touted by the public relations people at the NEA and the White House as a chance for "artists, producers, promoters, organizers, influencers, marketers, taste-makers, leaders, or just plain cool people to join together and work together to promote a more civically engaged America and celebrate how the arts can be used for a positive change!" Looking askance at this sudden rush to the other side of the political boat, Corrielche frets about the NEA being transformed into a "message machine" cranking out "imagery, songs, films, and literature" to achieve "what Noam Chomsky calls 'manufacturing consent.'"

This is a stretch. In the first place, when Chomsky talked about "manufacturing consent," he was not predicting a dire future but describing what, to him, was the dire present. Chomsky has long been a favorite among transgressive artists, because until quite recently—last November 4, to be exact—it was fashionable for people on the cutting edge of American culture to assert that the United States government was already a totalitarian regime, whose oppression was all the more effective for being wrapped in the illusion of freedom.

It was from such assertions—typically made by those who have the luxury of living under American totalitarianism, as opposed to some other kind—that the culture of transgression emerged and achieved its intellectual dominance. How amazing to think that it could evaporate so quickly! (And how wonderful.) ♦

ART RESOURCE

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B&A

Unthriller

The aging King of Pop prepares for his final appearance. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

The Michael Jackson concert-rehearsal movie *This Is It* features, as is the wont of such works of worship, testimonials to the wonders of the person whom the testifiers all call MJ. They talk of MJ's modesty and his perfectionism and his genius. The musicians and dancers who are hired to perform with MJ in the series of 50 concerts he was preparing at the time of his death in June weep with wonder and awe at being in his presence. They've been watching him since he was eight, or were singing his songs in choir when they were eight.

This Is It
Directed by Kenny Ortega

The question that is neither asked nor answered is this: If any of them had a son who was eight, would they conceivably permit that child to spend a millisecond alone with the King of Pop?

One prays not—but of course, many parents did acquiesce in MJ's sleepovers with their male children, more than I suspect we will ever know. In the course of more than two decades during which he lay next to prepubescent boys at night—"sharing a bed," he once said, is "the most loving thing you can do with someone"—two families were subsequently involved in legal action against MJ, one in a civil case leading to a cash settlement reportedly in excess of $20 million and the other in a criminal trial that ended in his acquittal by a jury of Californians who were, one hopes, not his peers.

His untimely demise at the age of 50 led to the only possible resuscitation of his career, a posthumous one. A still-living Michael Jackson could never have emerged from the shadows cast by his behavior, consistent in every particular with every pedophile's solipsistic conviction that his imperishable hunger to vampirize the innocence of children is nothing less than the highest form of love.

Add to that the bizarre efforts to amend and alter his own appearance, which had turned him into a kind of sideshow attraction of a human being, and you have a man for whom the fatal ingestion of a coma-inducing sleeping draught was the first smart career move in the quarter-century since he established a new standard for worldwide stardom with the release of *Thriller*.

This Is It, an assemblage of footage from rehearsals for concerts Jackson was to perform in London this fall, is part of that posthumous resuscitation. It's not a movie, it's not a concert, it's not a documentary, it's not really much of anything except an intermittently interesting portrait of how an overproduced pop event is created.

The movie posits the notion that these concerts were going to smash all records, put him back on top, show people things they had never seen before. But it wouldn't have. There's no there there. The MJ we see in nearly every frame of *This Is It* has no presence. He floats, wraith-like, through the film, and the director, Kenny Ortega, attempts to make him seem more substantial by offering subtitles of nearly every sentence MJ speaks.

In one sense, this is disturbing, because the subtitles have an almost deifying effect, the way Christ's words are printed in red in some versions of the New Testament. In another sense, by using this technique, Ortega is underlining just how spectral a creature Jackson had become.

He is a sickly looking 50-year-old man doing a wan imitation of his 25-year-old self—indeed, the man we are seeing could just as easily be a Michael Jackson imitator. What was once exciting to watch had long since curdled into embarrassing mannerism. The astonishing kid who seemed to be able to do anything with his body and voice proved, in the end, to be extremely limited.

He had maybe five dance moves he would simply go through over and over in different order—the crotch grab, the leg kick, the upper-body robot, the walking backwards forwards, and the circular slide—as he punctuated his tremulous falsetto with endlessly repetitive "hoos" and "hee hees" and "jamones." It's tedious to watch him dance, and tedious to listen to him sing.

The movie asks us to grade on a curve. We are supposed to be surprised and delighted to discover that Michael Jackson could still move at all, and that he could still hit a note. But he moves without spark, and he sings without conviction. It's not that he was just going through the moves; clearly, this series of concerts was very important to him. He's working hard, trying hard. But the Michael Jackson we see here, the Michael Jackson who died as the footage that became *This Is It* was being filmed, was already gone.

Michael Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor, 1997

PAUL SMITH / RETNA LTD. / CORBIS

There was no soul left in that surgically mutilated body. MJ had long ago surrendered it. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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"Democrats score congressional victories in California, New York

The GOP fares better in Virginia and New Jersey as both states elect Republican governors"

—Los Angeles Times, *November 4*

Maine Says Yes to Gay Unions

Only 53 percent have reservations about marriage equality

Hundreds Embrace Obama 'Prevention'

H1N1 vaccine still limited to Rhode Island, Delaware

RON HARPER

Lebanon Braces for Israeli Vengeance

Hezbollah rockets kill 11 commuters in Tel Aviv suburb

as mourners and emergency crews gathered around the site of the blast, attempting to identify relatives' remains and com

Malibu Property Values Plunge

Tsunami slams into Southland coast

RANDY HOLLAND

Chicago Now Europe's Favorite American City

Olympics awarded to Rio de Janeiro

left the crowd of Chicagoans angry—and standing sullenly in a street where seconds earlier a celebration had been expected

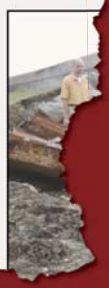
Senate Democrats See 'Real Progress'

Reid promises health care vote by July 4

DIRK DIGGLER

Rice-a-Roni Shortages Forecast

San Francisco leveled by massive quake



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